



## SATYAGRAHA IN ACTION

Indians who had spent nearly all their lives in South Africa; Gandhi was able to get assistance for them from South India; an appeal was made to the Supreme Court and the deportation system was ruled illegal.

Meantime, the *satyagraha* movement continued, although more slowly as a result of government prosecution of the Indians and the animosity of white people to whom Indian merchants owed money. They demanded immediate payment of the entire sum due. The Indians could not, of course, meet their demands.

Freed from jail once again in 1909, Gandhi decided that he must go to England to get more help for the Indians in Africa. He hoped to see English leaders and to place the problems before them, but the visit did little beyond acquainting those leaders with the difficulties Indians faced in Africa. In his nearly half year in Britain Gandhi himself, however, became a little more aware of India's own position.

On his way back to South Africa he wrote his first book, *Hind Swaraj* or *Indian Home Rule*. Written in Gujarati and later translated by himself into English, he wrote it on board the steamer *Kildonan Castle*. Instead of taking part in the usual shipboard life he used a packet of ship's stationery and wrote the manuscript in less than ten days, writing with his left hand when his right tired.

*Hind Swaraj* appeared in *Indian Opinion* in instalments first; the manuscript then was kept by a member of the family. Later, when its value was realized more clearly, it was reproduced in facsimile form. It ran into 275 pages. Only three lines were changed before publication. Forty years later he said he would change only one word.

By now all of Gandhi's own money had been put into the *satyagraha* movement. Only through donations from supporters in India was the family able to escape complete poverty.

A significant type of help came from a German architect

GANDHI  
WARRIOR OF NON-VIOLENCE

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G A N D H I  
WARRIOR OF NON-VIOLENCE

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AND  
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*Dedicated  
to  
the present generation of the East and the West  
who may wish to know more about Gandhi*



## FOREWORD

MAHATMA GANDHI is undoubtedly one of the greatest and most interesting personalities of the world. Though it is now over 21 years since he passed away, books are still being written in different parts of the world throwing some new light on the man or his philosophy or offering a fresh interpretation of his life and work.

Perhaps the best guide is his *Autobiography* but it does not tell the whole story of his life. However, what makes Gandhiji a unique man is his philosophy, a rich blend of the best in every religion and ethical concept. His main contribution to the welfare of mankind is his principle of non-violence—conquest of violence by love and goodwill.

Prof. Roland E. Wolseley and Shri P. D. Tandon are well-known journalists and authors of repute, one American and the other Indian, who have put in a lot of labour and research into their present joint venture. I think they have succeeded in their aim of setting Gandhiji in the right perspective in the contemporary world, thereby underlining his relevance not only for our time but also for the future of mankind itself in this nuclear age.

I am sure our young boys and girls who could not see this apostle of truth, love and non-violence in flesh will, by reading this book, imbibe the spirit and learn some of the values for which he lived and died.

*New Delhi  
September 20, 1969*

B. V. KESKAR



## PREFACE

THE PEOPLE of the world ask, as one crisis succeeds another in different parts of the globe, if there is not some other way for human beings to settle their differences than by violence. They want to know if the legalized violence of war and the illegal violence of murder and assault are to be with us always.

The means to carry out human destruction, either in person-to-person encounter or in mass attack from missiles originating thousands of miles away from their victims, have become more and more efficient. Human society, therefore, turns to all experiences and experiments for an answer, if possible, a new answer.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi thought he had an answer. It was the reply given before him by Henry David Thoreau, St. Francis of Assisi, Jesus of Nazareth, William Penn, William Lloyd Garrison, and of some of Gandhi's contemporaries, Leo Tolstoy, Jane Adams, Romain Rolland, Albert Schweitzer and Toyohiko Kagawa, for instance. All had the same answer but none of them tried to live that answer completely and in modern times, as did Gandhi.

Known by many names over the centuries—non-violence, non-resistance, and pacifism are only a few—this answer generally has been misunderstood. It has come into new prominence, however, in the second quarter of the 20th century.

If the power Gandhi believed in is available to man, perhaps he needs to take it more seriously. If it can save him, maybe he should see how it works. For it did work, in the life of Mohandas Gandhi, and in the lives of many of those around him. It worked in various parts of the world. Perhaps a new look at the life of the small man who led India for so many years with an apparently quixotic idea will give the world a little more

courage to try another method of resolving conflict, an old method but one barely used except here and there over the ages.

The sense of values of people in one nation is not necessarily the same as that of people in another. Once Gandhi kept a large political group waiting while he gave his full attention to an old woman's story of her troubles. Many of the political bigwigs were irked, but others, more patient beings and better acquainted with Gandhi, observed: "His sense of values might be more true than ours."

The sense of values—the sensitivity—that Mohandas Gandhi always displayed may be what more of the world's people need today. If they are successfully to find a way to avoid the catastrophic end of the human race in a new world war or a violent world revolution, be it from the extreme left or the extreme right, the Gandhian way may be the only one that mankind can risk.

P. D. TANDON  
ROLAND E. WOLSELEY

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## *Acknowledgments*

THE AUTHORS have relied heavily on Gandhi's *Autobiography* and the studies of him by Tendulkar, Pyarelal, Nanda, Fischer and other writers. All important source books are acknowledged in the bibliography. Many Indian documentary and personal sources also have been consulted, as have many persons close to Gandhi during much of his life. Since one of the co-authors is himself an Indian residing in India and closely acquainted with many persons who knew the Mahatma and the other co-author an American who has lived in India, it has been possible to check the authenticity of this material.

This checking process was much aided by the help of V. Y. Ghorpade, Secretary to the Minister for Information and Broadcasting of the Government of India at one time, and Jittendra Singh, while he was joint editor of the Allahabad *Leader*.

## SAINT AND DREAMER

To some people Mohandas Gandhi was a saintly figure, to others a dangerous fanatic, and to still others an impractical dreamer. All who knew him or of him were aware that he was physically frail but spiritually strong and that he led his country with amazing success. They knew, too, that there was something different about his way of life, his methods of dealing with people. That difference, they sometimes realized, was that he refused to use violent means to achieve his revolution and that he won millions of his followers over to that view. And some among those who comprehend Gandhi's philosophy today think that perhaps here is the way out for a torn world, caught in wars that may develop into conflicts holding the danger of human annihilation because of the modern scientific means of combat—as in the case of Vietnam, the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Biafra-Nigeria war and other danger points.

People who have seen pictures of Gandhi have seen a big-eared, spectacled, almost naked little man. They have heard recordings of his high voice and of the British English he spoke. They know that without weapons he defied the British lion, conquered him, and sent him home, obliging him to leave his country to independence.

Millions of people who had never heard of him became more aware of him when various nations issued postage stamps bearing his picture, some identifying him as the "Apostle of Non-violence".

But perhaps far more significant than even what he did in India is the influence of Mohandas Gandhi throughout the world by the example of his life. We learn, for instance, of students

in high schools and colleges influenced not only by Gandhi but also by Thoreau and Tolstoy who speak out for views which they identify with those of these fighters for liberty.

There was, for example, 18-year-old Ezell Blair, Jr., who led his American classmates in one of the many protests against the unwillingness of some lunch-counter operators to let people of black skin eat while seated at those counters. This boy, in talking with newspaper reporters, related that he and three of his schoolmates discussed Gandhian methods at great length when they were refused service at a store counter. Young Blair had been impressed with a telecast showing an account of India's life and history. He had seen Gandhi leaving jails only to be arrested again and again for his views, opinions based on a philosophy of love and kindness and on methods in line with such attitudes of goodwill.

About that same time in American life the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who was the leading Negro exponent of Gandhian social methods and had won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964, described how his mind had changed. He, too, paid tribute to Gandhi and acknowledged his philosophical debt to the Mahatma. Writing in *Christian Century* magazine during 1960 on the subject, "Pilgrimage to Non-violence", he described how, while he was a Boston University student, he had come upon Gandhi's ideas.

"As I read his work I became deeply fascinated by his campaign of non-violent resistance," he wrote. "The whole Gandhian concept of *satyagraha* was profoundly significant to me. As I delved deeper into the philosophy of Gandhi, my skepticism concerning the power of love gradually diminished, and I came to see for the first time that the Christian doctrine of love operating through the Gandhian method of non-violence was one of the most potent weapons available to oppressed people in their struggle for freedom."

Dr. King put this method to work dramatically for his people in Montgomery, Alabama, in 1954. The Gandhian principle, it developed, became "the guiding light" of the successful, peaceful movement of non-co-operation he led there in the struggle of the black American people to have the right to ride on buses, seated wherever they wished. He became convinced of non-violence as a method. And in 1960 he made his first visit to India. This experience, he then said, left him more convinced of the power of non-violence. He found that the spirit of Gandhi was very much alive in India, although diminished by the death of the Mahatma. He continued to speak and act in support of the Gandhian way of life to the extent of applying it to war and to the civil rights movement. In 1968 his assassination shocked the world and brought new attention to the philosophy of non-violence he so nobly epitomized. Since the early 1960's innumerable events have occurred, some faithful to Gandhi's ideas, others beginning in such faithfulness but then wandering from it, for non-violence is a difficult form of resistance to evil. Demonstrations, marches, sit-downs, sit-ins and other attempts to show resistance without violence sometimes have failed because they were not sincerely Gandhian or because those who conducted them had not the same for the self-discipline that the way of non-violence demands; it is not to fail.

Joan Baez, the American folk singer who is known in India not only for her voice but also for her point of view, conducts a school in the State of California to train people in the use of non-violent techniques of resistance. Such traditional world-wide peace groups as the Fellowship of Reconciliation and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom continue to place their reliance on the Gandhian way.

Some elements of the young people of the world who sometimes are derisively called "hippies" believe firmly in non-violence

and have the roots of this belief in the life of Gandhi and of other pacifist leaders. The subject is taught at various universities of the world and studied informally by those persons who hope to benefit from its mastery.

Norman Cousins, editor of the American magazine, *Saturday Review*, a frequent visitor to and writer about India and a friend of Jawaharlal Nehru, writes, for example, that he regrets that the world does not have "a man like Gandhi" to exert leadership in these times. But it is not only the intellectuals who are moved by Gandhi's life. John Steinbeck, the novelist and essayist, relates in his *Travels with Charley* that he talked to a young Negro student in the United States about the sit-ins going on at the time. The young man had taken part in them as well as in a bus boycott. They spoke of Martin Luther King and "his teaching of passive but unrelenting resistance".

"It's too slow," he said; "It will take too long."

"There's improvement, there's constant improvement," Gunther said, and added: "Gandhi proved it's the only weapon that can win against violence."

"I know all that. I've studied it. The gains are drops of water and time is passing. I want it faster. I want action—action now."

To which the author replied: "That might defeat the whole thing."

"I might be an old man before I'm a man at all. I might be dead before."

"That's true. And Gandhi's dead. Are there many like you who want action?" Gunther asked the student.

"Yes," he answered. "I mean, some—I mean, I don't know how many."

After they had talked awhile longer, the student left Steinbeck, but as he did so, he said:

"I'm ashamed. It's just selfishness. But I want to see it—

me—not dead. Here! Me! I want to see it—soon.”\*

Who was this Gandhi we find quoted so often in the midst of the world’s areas of conflict? Why does his counsel of non-violence haunt the world?

---

\*John Steinbeck: *Travels With Charley*. New York: Bantam Books, 1963, p. 271.

## MOHANDAS

GANDHI'S IMMEDIATE FAMILY was not a large one, as Indian families go, even in the present day when efforts are being made to keep them small because of food shortages. He was one of the three sons and a daughter of Karamchand and Putliba Gandhi, inheriting his middle name from his father. But the family as a whole was large, for there were two half-sisters, five uncles and their families, as well as a grandfather.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi came of a family of the merchant caste and government officials. His father, who had been married several times before he met and wedded Putliba, was commonly known as Kaba. His mother's name was altered to Putlibai by people familiar with her, the *bai* ending being attached to women's names in the spirit of affection. It means *sister*.

Mohandas, whom the family sometimes called Mohania or Mohan for short, was born on October 2, 1869 in Porbander, a fishing town in Western India on the Arabian Sea. It is on a bay in the south-west edge of the Kathiawar Peninsula, which forms one side of the Gulf of Cambay, the mainland being the other.

With his brothers and the lone sister (Lakshmidas or Kala; Karsandas or Karsania, and Raliatbehn or Goki), Mohandas as a boy lived in a house which, compared with the places he lived in when he accepted voluntary poverty, one could call palatial. It was three-storeyed, made of hard, white stone with crudely carved wooden windows and doors, and surrounded by a wall. The Karamchand Gandhi family itself had two rooms, a kitchen, and a verandah.

The Gandhi family was of the *bania* caste, a class distinction now weakening in India, although still strong. The *banias* are merchants; in that part of India where Mohandas was born, the *banias* often sold grocery, as did Karamchand Gandhi.

When he was twenty-five, Karamchand Gandhi became *Diwan* or *Dewan*, that is, the prime minister of Porbander, which also was the name of a princely state. He succeeded his father Uttamchand, and served nearly thirty years in that post.

The turn from merchant to prime minister was not as unusual as it may now appear, for Karamchand was more of a business manager in the government than a diplomat. He served usefully not only in Porbander but also in two other small states, Rajkot and Vankaner.

A man of little formal education, Karamchand was not interested in acquiring either money or property and was respectful of the ritual of his religion, which was Hinduism. He was nearly fifty years old when Mohandas was born, so the boy always looked upto his father rather than considered him a companion.

Like most Hindu boys, Mohandas believed in obeying his father without question. He did not always do so, any more than other youngsters always do as their parents tell them. But he had a conscience that soon made him confess when he disobeyed. One day one of Mohan's brothers paid off a debt with a little gold. Mohan saw him. He stole it, but felt so guilty that he wrote a confession addressed to his father. They cried about this together and the incident ended happily. Mohan was from early childhood an absolutely honest boy. In fact, this trait moved other youngsters to leave him out of their tricks and pranks, for he did not like to take part in what he considered mean behaviour of any sort.

On another occasion Mohan saw one of his uncles smoking cigarettes. He took a partly-smoked cigarette and then, with the other children in the house, he sneaked off to steal the ser-

vant's small change so he could buy more smokes. But that did not buy enough for him, so he smoked wild plant stalks, but they, too, did not satisfy him. Then, when someone told them the stalks were a poisonous weed, the kids were remorseful, and possibly their stomachs were upset. They agreed to commit suicide and went to a temple for the right place to take their lives, but lost their courage. Instead they gave up smoking. And they confessed what had happened, Mohan of course telling his father.

Because Karamchand died only seventeen years after Mohandas was born, he never shared much of his son's young manhood. And Putlibai, his mother, also died while Mohan was still in his teens. She was a typically devoted Hindu wife whose life centred in her home and her temple. Strict in observance of her religion, she fasted and had no interest in covering herself with jewels and silks, as did some of the other women of the court circles in which she moved because of her husband's position. She was kindly, suffered over the troubles of others, and loved and sacrificed all for her children and her husband. Putlibai died while her son, who by then had become a law student, was studying in England.

His mother, it has been said of Putlibai, "was perhaps the biggest single influence in shaping the Mahatma of the future". When we see how he, too, was always earnest in purpose, relied on fasting, in doing penance, and lived a simple life, this opinion about his mother's influence can be thought to have been true. But it was not only in these positive ways in which she affected his ideas of life. He learned, also, to dislike the superstitions in which she believed, such as untouchability, the power of the moon when it was in eclipse, and the caste system in general.

Porbander town, where Mohandas grew up, was sometimes called "the white city" because of its pale stone buildings. Its

temples and open front shops. About one hundred yards from the coast, Porbander looks out upon the Arabian Sea. Mohandas' great-grandfather, Harjivan, in 1777 bought the family home, which still stands about one quarter of a mile from the sea. Grandfather Uttamchand's seven sons and their families, under the joint family system of the time, lived in the big house together. Each had its own kitchen.

Mohan was born in a room twenty feet long, thirteen wide, and eleven high in the solidly built old house. It stands, as it did then, on the three sides of an underground storage tank or pool, which for many years provided purer water than was available elsewhere in Porbander town, for it collected rain. Mohandas's parents' portion of the house included three rooms, one of them a kitchen, and a verandah or porch. The space was about the size of a parlour and the bedroom was like a typical apartment of today.

Until he was seven, Mohan went to an elementary school a few minutes' walk from his home. As a boy he had a wide brow, big ears that stuck out, bright, piercing eyes, and a thin face. Because he was the youngest of the children, the family liked to vary his name also to Manu, derived from Mohandas.

Three years were spent in a public school in Rajkot, a neighbouring princely state of which his father was to become prime minister in time. Alfred High School, an imposing, arch-windowed structure that he attended after primary school, was in Kathiawar. Mohan finished his studies there the year his father died.

When he was fourteen and a student at Alfred, the headmaster one day asked Mohan:

“Why were you absent from the gymnastics class on Saturday?”

“I was nursing my father,” Mohan answered. “I had no watch and the clouds deceived me. When I arrived, all the boys had gone.”

“You are lying,” the headmaster said bluntly.

Gandhi was not lying. But he was at a loss to know what to do to convince the headmaster that he was telling the truth. The accusation brought forth tears. This was the boy who not many years later was to show greater physical and spiritual courage than most human beings can muster.

As a schoolboy Mohandas was meticulously punctual, had trouble with mathematics, and was easily offended, because he feared so much being laughed at. Usually he respected orders from his teachers, a surprising characteristic since most of his life from then on he was a famous rebel. One time in school he refused to obey a certain teacher, however, who had urged him to cheat to save a class spelling record during an inspection.

He was deeply interested in gardening. His knowledge of plants and flowers developed from his boyhood work and his observations about his own little Rajkot garden.

Bhavnagar, a town near Porbander, was the site of Samaldas College. Mohandas enrolled there in 1887. Teachers used English. Although his language was Gujarati, he also had been taught a formal kind of English.

Because he could not follow the lectures at Samaldas, he withdrew, saying that he wished to continue his education in England. As in Britain, higher Indian education for many years had depended on the lecture system and grades were obtained entirely by passing long examinations. This plan handicapped Mohandas, with his bookish knowledge of the English language.

### CHAPTER III

## MOHANDAS AND KASTURBAI

THE WEDDING of Mohandas Gandhi at thirteen and of Kasturba Makanji, the same age, was not as extraordinary as it may seem to Western people. In those days, it was customary for parents to arrange matches for their children. Now very often a boy finds his own mate, and a girl, less often, decides whom she would marry. Formerly, couples married first and then fell in love, as it were. Now Hindu joint families are becoming increasingly scarce and husband and wife often live together, sometimes away from their parents.

Kasturba was the daughter of Gokaldass Makanji, a Porbander merchant and friend of the Gandhi family. As a boy, Mohandas had read of the ideals of marriage. To him the most important one was fidelity; he also was impressed with the Hindu belief that the wife should obey absolutely. The idea that he was to rule his wife without being questioned on his right to do so appealed to him. As we shall see, he was later to change his views about marriage radically.

But in 1882, when he and Kasturba were wedded as part of a triple ceremony, he held orthodox ideas about marriage. Mohandas, his brother Karsandas, and a cousin were bridegrooms at the same time, having been betrothed to Porbander girls. They were married at the same time because three ceremonies were cheaper when performed together than separately, as these ceremonies are staged in some cases in India even today. For they are elaborate affairs, the celebration sometimes lasting several days. The bride must bring a dowry; often the families go into such deep debt for the wedding costs that it takes years for the father to recover financially. But these

are fast becoming a thing of the past.

The wedding over, Mohandas began to take a domineering attitude. But Kasturbai had a will of her own and did not agree to his ways. And while she probably did not realize it, she contributed much towards the development of his character by the way she resisted his will. She was quiet, submissive on the surface, and long-suffering. But often she won her point through patience. This result was not true at first in their long life together, for she did not understand her extraordinary husband, who from his twenties developed unusual philosophical views. His desire to change the way things were done in society shocked her at first, but she came to appreciate his viewpoint. And she always came around to supporting him in all his plans, often at great discomfort and sacrifice.

Theirs was in reality a child marriage. Later Gandhi came to oppose the practice of which he and Kasturbai had been a part.

“I can see no moral argument in support of such a preposterously early marriage,” he wrote in his *Autobiography*. For they had actually been married at the age of thirteen, not just betrothed. The latter is an engagement; it can be broken, for it is merely an agreement between the respective parents in which the young people are not even consulted. Much later Mohandas learned that he had been betrothed in this way three times before his marriage. One of these engagements occurred when he was only seven. The marriages never resulted because each of the little girls selected to become his bride died. Such a series of deaths was not unusual, for child mortality in India then was high.

The two Gandhi brothers went 120 miles from Rajkot to Porbander for their wedding, being joined there by the cousin. Mohandas and Kasturbai, merely children still, went through the colourful ceremony like grown-ups. Both had been advised on how to behave during and after the wedding and both hardly

understood the real meaning of what was happening. The ceremony was performed in a small space in front of the verandah of the Gandhi house at Porbander. The marriage party went through the winding lanes to the house of Kasturba's parents nearby. They took the seven steps that a Hindu bride and bridegroom must take together, promising as they walk to be faithful and devoted. They put into each other's mouths bits of sweetmeat, an act which occurs at the end of the ceremony.

Mohandas had one strong ambition for his illiterate wife. He wanted to teach her to read and write. But his public life and other activities left him so little time for this that she never achieved proficiency. He taught her little and could not afford a private tutor. Also, Kasturbai was often called away to her father's home. Soon Mohandas went to England to study law. These and later separations, however, never diminished their love.

Six years after their marriage, their first son, Harilal, was born. They had three more children, all boys: Manilal was next, in 1892; Ramdas was born in 1897; and three years later Devadas.

## TO ENGLAND

HIS FAMILY was appalled when it heard that Mohandas, still only 16, wished to go abroad. This idea was contrary to the tenets of orthodox Hinduism. In fact, when the elders of his caste heard of this, they nearly excommunicated him. Mixing with foreigners would contaminate him, would make him an outcast. His mother never really consented, but being a Hindu wife, she accepted her husband's decision, as was the custom. So of course did Mohandas's child-wife.

With help from his brother Lakshmidas, who provided him with money for the trip by going deeply into debt, Mohandas made his plans to take a passage on a ship to London. Before he departed he had to vow to Becharji Swami, a Jain monk, that he would not touch wine, woman and meat. The slender, round-faced boy took his vow earnestly.

A rebel by nature, here was young Gandhi's first stand against important tradition, superstition, and prejudice. He defied his elders and sailed on September 4, 1888. He was launching himself on a career as a lawyer and went abroad because he realized that a degree from England was important in those days, when Britain ruled India.

During his three years as a law student in England, Mohandas went through many changes of mind. He was still a more or less conventional youth, intent on making money and enjoying himself, with little if any thought of mankind or of the future of his country.

When he had become settled in London, he went to an expensive haberdashery and had himself outfitted in dudish regalia that were entirely unlike his dress as most of the world now

remembers it. The Gandhi of law student days wore patent-leather shoes, a swallow-tailed coat, black spats and a silk top-hat, and carried a silver-mounted cane. All this was the vogue. He grew a moustache, parted his hair on the left, and tried to be dashing.

For some months he lived as he thought an English gentleman should live. He wore new suits of high quality, sported a watch with a double gold chain, and took lessons in elocution, dancing and music.

Meanwhile he was having school troubles. He failed in the Latin examination the first time he took it, but passed it the next. He had no difficulties, however, with the law course as a whole, for in the latter part of the nineteenth century it was comparatively easy to pass. But Gandhi was eager to make the most of this opportunity and was conscientious; he did extra reading and so was successful in the bar examination. All his studies had been in English law.

Soon he did more than study. He began to take interest in religion and philosophy. He attended meetings of a group known as vegetarians and theosophists; they aroused his interest in those beliefs. Vegetarianism—the practice of not eating meat but only vegetables—was a natural part of Hinduism, but until then he had taken his religion more or less for granted and given its meaning little thought. Theosophy—a system of religion that relies on thinking and meditating—also was strong in Indian religious life for centuries. Therefore it was not strange in its meaning for Gandhi.

Even cooking engaged his attention; he first tried his hand at it when he was 18. While continuing his law studies, he began preparing his own breakfasts and dinners; at home in India he had never cooked. He bought a stove and provided his meals at the low cost of a shilling and three pence a day. As he became more and more of a vegetarian, his diet changed.

On his return to India in 1891, he hired a Brahmin cook, but he had to do half the cooking himself and teach the man to be clean, making him wash his clothes and take baths. Later still; when he began life in *ashramis* all cooking for him and the others in the colonies was simplified. He disliked "slavery to the palate", as he called elaborate cooking. The records show that Gandhi "could prepare rice, vegetable soup, salads, marmalade... a sort of pudding out of finely powdered baked *chapati* (a type of breadstuff), porridge of coarsely-ground wheat, and wheaten coffee from baked wheat powder".

But before leaving for India he had worn out his affection for looking like a Beau Brummell and had completed his law studies. On arrival in his own country he learned that his mother had died while he was in London and he had not been told, so as not to upset him. Shocked, he went from Bombay to Rajkot, where his family now lived, but returned soon to Bombay to set up his law practice. It was not long before Gandhi realized that he knew no Indian law and set himself to study Hindu and Moslem law at once.

Defence of a poor woman, Mamibai, was his first case. It turned into a humiliating experience. He was to be paid thirty rupees, in those days about ten dollars. But when he arose in the court-room to speak on behalf of his client, he was tongue-tied and could not go on. He returned the woman's money and another lawyer finished the case. Gandhi became so discouraged that he decided to go back to Rajkot and soon was making a sort of living by writing petitions for three hundred rupees a month. By then he considered himself a total failure; he was disheartened and did not know if he should continue to practise law or become a teacher.

One day an incident occurred which influenced his life greatly. He called it "the first shock of my life". His brother, Lakshmidas, who had helped him finance his study in England, was

secretary and adviser to the ruler of Porbander. Lakshmidas, who had been accused of giving some wrong advice, asked Mohandas to intervene for him with the British officer who was serving as the Political Agent, a man whom he had known in England but who was thought to be prejudiced against Lakshmidas. Gandhi did not like this request, feeling that it put him in the position of taking advantage of an acquaintanceship. But his brother pressed him to go and see the officer, which Mohandas hardly could refuse to do. So he went, unwillingly and with misgivings that turned out to have some foundation.

He got an appointment. The officer was formal and stuffy.

"Your brother is an intriguer," he said in an overbearing tone. "I want to hear nothing more from you. I have no time. If your brother has anything to say, let him apply through the proper channel."

Gandhi persisted, but the officer rose stiffly and said, impatiently, "You must go now."

"But please hear me out," Mohandas said, and that angered the British officer, who called a peon (an office messenger) and ordered him to show Gandhi out.

Angered, Mohandas sent a note back to the officer. "You have insulted me," he wrote. "You have assaulted me through your peon. If you make no amends, I shall have to proceed against you."

The reply accused Gandhi of rudeness.

"I asked you to go and you would not," the officer said. "I had no option but to order my peon to show you the door. Even after he asked you to leave the office, you did not do so. He therefore had to use just enough force to send you out. You are at liberty to proceed as you wish."

Realizing that he was only a junior barrister, Gandhi did not know what to do next. He asked the advice of one of India's most famous lawyers, Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, who happened

to be in Rajkot then. The advice he received through a messenger was to tear up the note and to pocket the insult. "He will gain nothing by proceeding against the sahib, and on the contrary will very likely ruin himself. Tell him he has yet to know life," the noted lawyer said.

This advice, Gandhi later wrote, "was as bitter as poison to me, but I had to swallow it. 'Never again shall I place myself in such a false position, never again shall I try to exploit friendship in this way,' said I to myself.... This shock changed the course of my life."

## CHAPTER V

### INSULTS IN SOUTH AFRICA

THIS QUARREL with the Political Agent effectively blocked Gandhi from developing his law practice, as did the petty political squabbles in the whole area of Kathiawar.

One day in 1893 Lakshmidas received a letter from a local firm, Dada Abdulla & Co., saying that there was a big legal case in South Africa, a claim for forty thousand British pounds, and suggesting that Mohandas Gandhi go there to instruct the firm's legal counsel. Gandhi was tempted, particularly in the light of recent frustrating events. When he learned that it was to be for not more than a year, with a first-class passage and payment of £105, he accepted.

Durban was the port in Natal, South Africa, at which Gandhi's ship landed him. When he went ashore he wore a frock coat and turban, a more costly costume than that worn by most Indians who moved to Africa.

A few days after his arrival Gandhi was taken to the Durban law court. There occurred an incident which, like the encounter with the haughty British officer in India, shocked the young Indian lawyer. He entered the court-room still wearing his turban. Soon he found the magistrate staring at him and then heard him ask him to remove his head covering. He refused and then left the room.

Later he learned that only Muslim (Moslem) headgear was permitted in the court, and that most Indians were called "coolies". He was being called a "coolie barrister". Gandhi decided that he could avoid insult by wearing an English hat thereafter, but his Indian friends pointed out that this would compromise the Indians who insisted upon wearing a turban, which they had a

right to do. So he not only continued to wear his turban but also wrote to the Natal papers about the court-room incident. Both these actions launched newspaper discussion of the matter and directed attention to his presence in South Africa.

Meantime he was working on the law case for which he had been sent to South Africa. He boarded a train to the city of Pretoria to try for a settlement of the dispute. He was given a first-class ticket. When the train reached Maritzburg, the capital of the state of Natal, a white passenger boarded Gandhi's car. On seeing that Gandhi was an Indian and not white, the passenger brought in several train officials. Gandhi was told that he must go to the baggage compartment.

"But I have a first-class ticket," he insisted.

"That doesn't matter," the railway official said. "You must go to the van compartment."

Gandhi explained that he was admitted to the first-class compartment at Durban and that he intended to stay in it.

"No, you won't," said the official. He then threatened to call the police if Gandhi persisted in his threat to remain where he was.

Mohandas told him to call the police, adding: "I refuse to get out voluntarily."

A constable came, pushed him out of the compartment, and sent his baggage after him. Still Gandhi refused to go to the van or baggage compartment, and the train rolled away without him. He dragged some of his luggage to the waiting-room, but left most of it on the platform. By now railway officials had taken charge of it. He realized that he was suffering from cold as well as humiliation, for it was winter, and Maritzburg was at a high altitude. His overcoat was in his baggage, but he did not want to risk further insult by asking for it, so he shivered through the night, his social conscience becoming the sharper as he meditated on what had happened to him. He

records in his *Autobiography* his thoughts of the night:

"I began to think of my duty. Should I fight for my rights or go back to India, or should I go on to Pretoria without minding the insults, and return to India after finishing the case? It would be cowardice to run back to India without fulfilling my obligation. The hardship to which I was subjected was superficial—only a symptom of the deep disease of colour prejudice. I should try, if possible, to root out the disease and suffer hardships in the process. Redress for wrongs I should seek only to the extent that would be necessary for the removal of the colour prejudice."

As a result of these reflections, he decided to go by the next train on to Pretoria, and to telegraph the railway line's general manager and his sponsor. Abdulla Sheth, the sponsor, received his message and went to see the general manager of the line. This official defended the conduct of the railway people at Maritzburg but added that he had instructed the station-master there to see that Gandhi reached Pretoria safely. Abdulla Sheth also had taken some other steps: he had wired friends in Maritzburg and nearby to look after Gandhi; they, too, had been similarly humiliated and were sympathetic.

Not until evening of the second day, however, was he able to travel on. He did so in a reserved berth. But his troubles were not over yet. When the train pulled into Charlestown the next morning, the agent refused to honour his ticket on the stage-coach that connected railway lines between Charlestown and Johannesburg.

"Your ticket is cancelled," the agent told Gandhi.

The Indian lawyer protested, naturally. It was evident that he was still considered a coolie and not to be placed inside the coach with the white people. Finally, he was told that he could sit on the coach-box, which he decided to do, in spite of the offence it represented, because he wanted to get to his destination.

When the coach reached the town of Pardekoph, the leader of it, a white man who usually sat on the coach-box, decided he wanted his seat back, so he could smoke and get fresh air. He placed a dirty piece of cloth on the footboard and said to Gandhi:

“*Sami*, you sit on this, I want to sit near the driver.” *Sami* was only another name for coolie.

“It was you who seated me here, though I should have been accommodated inside,” Gandhi said in protest. “I put up with the insult,” he went on. “Now that you want to sit outside and smoke, you would have me sit at your feet. I will not do so, but I am prepared to sit inside.”

The man descended, swore, and then hit Gandhi about the head and tried to drag him off the coach. But the young Indian held on to the coach-box rails. Finally some of the passengers sided with Gandhi and urged that he be let alone and be allowed to sit with them inside. The coach leader got up, but threatened to do something more when they reached the village of Standerton. There Gandhi was met by Indian friends, however, and they comforted him by describing their own humiliations of the sort.

Gandhi was not one to let the matter rest there. He wrote to the agent of the coach company, reporting what had happened and asking assurance that he would not be similarly treated the next day when he resumed his journey. He was told that he would be accommodated as he wished. And so it turned out. He reached Johannesburg safely that same night. This metropolis of South Africa was for him another stop-over point on the way to Pretoria, which was in the Transvaal.

Having missed the man who was to have met him at the stage-stop, Gandhi innocently tried to take a room in one of the large Johannesburg hotels. The manager told him that the place was “full up” so he took another taxicab to an Indian friend’s shop, where he learned that Indians suffered even more discrimination there than in Natal. Hotels would not give them rooms and

they had to travel third-class on trains, since first- and second-class tickets would not be sold to Indians.

Once again Gandhi would not accept the regular treatment. He examined the railway regulations and found what he considered a loophole in them regarding Indians. He sent a note to the station-master, explaining that he was a barrister who always travelled first-class and that he wanted a first-class ticket as soon as possible and would call for it and expect it from the station-master in person. This plan was an attempt to avoid being refused in writing. Gandhi went to the station dressed in a frock-coat and wearing a tie, placed his sovereign on the counter for his fare and asked for the first-class ticket he had requested. He received it.

The station-master, it turned out, was a Hollander and not a Transvaaler. After explaining that he was from Europe and not Africa, he added that he understood how Gandhi felt. But there was a condition in his sale of the ticket: if he was asked to move out of first-class, Gandhi was not to involve him by bringing proceedings against the railway line. To this Gandhi agreed.

He took his seat in the first-class compartment. When the guard came to examine the tickets, he motioned Gandhi to the third class. The young lawyer showed him his first-class ticket, which the guard ignored.

The one English passenger in the compartment came to Gandhi's defence and argued with the guard, saying that he did not mind at all having him travel with him. The guard went off, muttering that if the Englishman wanted to travel with a coolie, he did not care. And so the train-and-coach journey to Pretoria ended peacefully that night.

Gandhi was not to be united with his colleagues in that city without one more incident, however. Nor was it like the others. Because it was a Sunday when he arrived at the Pretoria station,

no one had come to meet him. The station ticket collector turned out to be friendly but could not suggest where Gandhi might go to stay overnight; he did not want to risk further insults by going to hotels.

An American Negro, it turned out, was the one to come to his assistance. He took him to a hotel run by another American, who gave him a room on the understanding that he eat his dinner there. The proprietor explained that he did not himself object to Gandhi eating in the hotel dining-room but that his other guests, all white Europeans, would do so. Gandhi understood, having by now learned more and more about racial problems.

But he did not have to eat alone in his room, after all. Mr. Johnson, the hotel operator, had decided to ask the other guests if they would mind. They did not, so Gandhi was asked to step into the dining-room. By next morning he was ready to look into the legal case which had brought him to Pretoria.



I want world  
sympathy in  
this battle of  
Right against  
Wrong.

Dandi MK Gandhi

5.4.30

2. AN APPEAL ISSUED FROM DANDI



3. MARCH ON FOOT TO THE SEASHORE AT DANDI ON THE EVE OF  
THE SALT SATYAGRAHA, 1930



4. GANDHIJI'S HUT IN SEVAGRAM

## VICTORY AND A NEW TASK

THE LAW CASE Gandhi had come to fight was a suit for £40,000, then about \$200,000. It was a complex one, including complicated accounting records and various business transactions. His part was to prepare his employer's brief for the attorney. This meant understanding each transaction and organizing all the facts. The young lawyer from India learned much by observing how the attorneys on both sides did their work.

Among the lessons he taught himself was that fighting such cases could become an extremely costly affair and that it would be wiser for both parties to arbitrate the suit and come to a compromise. They agreed, since they, too, realized that continuation of the battle in the courts was becoming so expensive that there would be no victory for either if the litigation went on.

An arbitrator awarded the case to Gandhi's client, who co-operated in the spirit of the settlement by accepting payment in small instalments, instead of all in one sum, as usually handled. Gandhi later wrote of the experience:

“My joy was boundless. I had learnt the true practice of law. I had learnt to find out the better side of human nature and to enter men's hearts. I realized that the true function of a lawyer was to unite parties riven asunder.”

During the twenty years of his law practice, as a result of this experience in Africa, he spent much of his time achieving private compromises in hundreds of cases. From this he took great satisfaction; it was his idea of victory.

While this work was going on, he was making new friends. Some were among the Indians living in South Africa, a few were British Christians serving as missionaries there. Both the

Christians and the Indian Muslims sought to change his religious persuasion from Hinduism into which he had been born.

The discussions in which he engaged with those attempting to convert him and his own thinking about religion growing out of them led him to read intensively in religion and philosophy. He has listed some of the titles of the books that meant much to him. They included Leo Tolstoy's *The Kingdom of God is Within You*, which affected him so deeply that he said that it overwhelmed him. He never changed his faith, but he also never failed to express his debt to his Christian friends for what he described as "the religious quest" they had awakened in him.

Once he was asked, however, "What is there specially in the Bible that is not to be found in our sacred books?" The questioner, of course, was a fellow Hindu.

His answer was that he held it to be the duty of every cultured man or woman to read sympathetically the scriptures of the world.

"If we are to respect others' religions as we would have them respect our own, a study of the world's religions is a sacred duty," he went on to say. "We need not dread, upon our grown-up children, the influence of scriptures other than our own. We liberalize their outlook upon life by encouraging them to study freely all that is clean."

There would be, he also said, fear when someone read his own scriptures to young people with the intention secretly or openly of converting them.

"He must then be biased in favour of his own scriptures.

"For myself, I regard my study of and reverence for the Bible, the Koran, and all the other scriptures to be wholly consistent with any claim to be a staunch Hindu....My respectful study of other religions has not abated my reverence for or my faith in the Hindu scriptures....They have broadened my view of life. They have enabled me to understand more clearly many an obscure passage in the Hindu scriptures."

His legal case over, he went back to Durban, planning to return to India. Just before a farewell party was to be given for him he took time to look through some newspapers he found in the home of Abdulla Sheth. He noticed a paragraph almost buried on one of the pages. It caught his eye because of the headline: INDIAN FRANCHISE.

It referred to a bill then before the legislature which would remove the right of Indians to elect members to the Legislative Assembly of Natal. Shocked at this injustice, as he considered it, he discussed it with his friends. He could see that this would make the lot of Indians in South Africa even more difficult and might be followed with still more severe restrictions.

He was urged to stay on for another month to fight this bill. And here was the first venture by Mohandas Gandhi into politics, a small one indeed but the forerunner of many activities that would have a tremendous political significance.

Someone mentioned paying him for his services, as the campaign against the bill began.

"There can be no fees for public work," he said.

All he requested was that the expenses—on telegrams, law books, printing of literature, and the like—be paid. He began at once to outline his plans. To the discriminatory bill he added another clause: the unfair restrictions against Indian tradesmen or those seeking to immigrate.

Response to his leadership came quickly from the Natal Indian population. Ten thousand signatures from all over the large state were obtained for a petition to Lord Ripon, Secretary of State for the Colonies, urging that the government recognize the Indians' right to vote.

Publicity for the cause was obtained in India and in England as well, where leading papers supported the Indians in Natal. By now Gandhi's month had passed. Too involved in this fight to leave, he decided to settle for the time being in Natal,

supporting himself with fees from merchants who employed him to take care of their legal work. He applied for the right to practise before the Supreme Court. At once he was opposed because of his colour, although he had met all legal requirements except a technicality of a certain certificate which was not attached to his official papers.

Finally, however, his application was accepted, but the Chief Justice brought up a matter that was familiar enough to Gandhi: his turban. He was told that he must remove it, just as in the District Magistrate's court. He decided to compromise this time, for he had more important causes to fight for in Africa.

The public work that was his main interest now was centred in a group he had founded so as better to carry on the task systematically. This organization was the Natal Indian Congress, which he served as secretary. It carried on propaganda to acquaint people in other parts of Africa, in India and in England with the status of Indians in the state of Natal. Also it united Indians from all walks of life and provided a meeting ground for them.

Along with all this his religious studies continued. He read more of Tolstoy and acquainted himself with Washington Irving's *Life of Mahomet and His Successors*, a study of Mahomet by Thomas Carlyle, and many Hindu books. And he was taking his idealism seriously.

He was in the suburbs of Durban one day with others from the Natal Indian Congress. He saw near one Indian colony some people hiding behind trees. His companions told him, with some concern for him, that these shy and elusive figures were lepers in an advanced stage of the disease and therefore kept away from other human beings.

"Impulsively and ignoring the protests of his disconcerted companions," the account of this incident goes on, Gandhi "deviated from his scheduled route and walked, alone, up to the

frightened lepers. Soon he was engrossed in conversation with them." This was the first of similar actions during the rest of his life. In India, many years later, he gave shelter to a leper at a retreat against the wishes of others there. But he explained, at a prayer meeting, that he had pondered the decision deeply one whole night and that it was a challenge to his faith. The leper was Dr. Parchure Shastri, a scholar. He was admitted to the colony and Gandhi massaged him with his own hands. Dr. Shastri lived there for some years, near Gandhi, who worked often for the improvement of the lot of the lepers of India, spreading knowledge of the disease, organizing the relief of lepers, including it in his national plans for India. He insisted that having leprosy was not a contamination, that lepers should not be segregated, that leprosy carried no stigma, and that lepers were not hopeless derelicts of society who could not be saved.

His taking his idealism seriously had resulted, also, in Gandhi remaining in Africa at great personal sacrifice. It turned out that three years passed and he was still there and still separated from his family. In 1896, he decided that he wanted to rejoin Kasturbai and the children, and bring them to his South African home. He also thought this would provide a chance to raise money for the Congress work in Natal. He sailed for Calcutta, on India's north-eastern coast, a journey of twenty-four days. On board he studied Urdu and Tamil, Indian languages he did not know well enough.

On arriving in India again he soon began to give speeches and write articles to call attention to conditions in South Africa. One of these pieces of writing, a pamphlet, was to bring him trouble.

Kasturbai, her two sons, and a son of his widowed sister Goki were with him when he left India again by ship in December. They sailed by the *Courland*; another steamship departed for Durban at the same time, the *Naderi*. This double sailing was to be important on their arrival in South Africa.

## CHAPTER VII

### “HANG OLD GANDHI ON THE SOUR APPLE TREE”

BOTH SHIPS arrived outside Durban harbour on December 18, having survived a severe storm. Gandhi was not a victim of sea-sickness, so he was able to comfort those passengers who were. All told, the *Courland* and the *Naderi* carried eight hundred.

But the storm he was to face soon on land was a far more trying experience. In those days towards the end of the century, ship passengers could not land without a thorough medical examination. The two vessels from India were being watched carefully because there had been a plague in Bombay when they left.

Sure enough, a five-day quarantine was ordered, but Gandhi suspected another motive. The suspicions proved only too true when the passengers learned that some of the white people on shore were holding meetings and trying to have the ships sent back without unloading their passengers. The real intent of the quarantine was to bring this about. There were even threats of pushing the Indian travellers into the sea.

Gandhi learned, also, that it was he who was the real target of all this activity. He was accused of bringing Indians to South Africa so as to increase their power and numbers, and of unfairly condemning the white people of Natal while he was home in India. Neither charge was true, since he had induced no one to go but his own family, knew none of the other passengers until he met them aboard ship, and had said nothing about the white people of Natal in India which he had not said in Natal as well.

Finally the ships were permitted to enter the harbour and to disembark their passengers. The Gandhi family was told to wait until evening to leave, because of the strong feeling against Mohandas. Then the legal adviser to the shipping company

ffered to get the Gandhis off at once, since the crowds by then had scattered. Mrs. Gandhi and the children went first and were taken off safely.

Gandhi and the legal agent were to go on foot to their final destination in the city, but Mohandas was recognized at once, and a crowd began to gather, so the two men hailed a rickshaw. But they were prevented from entering it by the shouting, pushing crowd. The mob increased so rapidly that the two men were separated. Then stones, brickbats, and rotten eggs were thrown. Gandhi, his turban was pulled down from his head, and he was hit and kicked.

When the wife of the police superintendent happened to pass by, he was saved. She shielded him until a ring of police was put around him and then took him to where he was to stay, without further harm.

White hoodlums continued to mill in the streets yelling for Gandhi. They surrounded the house where the Gandhi family was staying. Gandhi now had to reverse his policy. Earlier he had decided to enter the danger zone openly and had as a result barely escaped serious injury. But he was being counselled to wear a disguise and leave. If he did not, his friend's house probably would be destroyed.

In his *Autobiography* he did not pretend that he knew then whether he decided on the disguise to save his friend's property, to save his family from danger, or to save himself. Putting on an Indian constable's uniform, he wrapped a scarf around a slate (to give it the appearance of a helmet). Two detectives went out with him, disguised as Indians.

The escape was successful.

While all this was happening, the police superintendent distract the crowd by leading a tune which had as its words, "Hang old Gandhi on the sour apple tree". Not until he knew that "old Gandhi" was safe did he tell the mob that the Indian

lawyer was gone. The house was searched, he was indeed gone, and then the crowd broke up.

When the British Government officials offered to prosecute those who had assaulted Gandhi if he wanted them to do so, he refused.

"I do not want to prosecute anyone," he said. He explained that his assailants had been given misinformation about him and that he could understand their rage at him. He was sure, he said, that when the truth became known they would be sorry.

Nor was he wrong. An interview with a reporter of the *Natal Advertiser* a few days later gave him a chance to clear the air with facts. The press defended him and the Durban Europeans were ashamed of what had happened. The incident both improved the prestige of the Indians in the city and increased the animosity of those who opposed them. For this time they had fought back, although not with violence.

Gandhi proceeded to resume his work with the Natal Indian Congress. But he felt the need to do some humanitarian work of a permanent nature. So for two hours each morning he added to his duties that of being a nurse in a small mission charitable hospital, an experience which was to be of use later during the Boer War. He also was becoming increasingly sure that the simple life should be his. He began doing more of his own work, becoming less and less dependent upon service from others. He already knew how to cook. To this he added doing his own laundry and cutting his own hair.

During the Boer War, which began in 1899 and was between the British Government and the Dutch settlers in South Africa, Gandhi supported the British, although his personal sympathies were with the Boers, as the settlers were known. Why did he take this position? Because, being a British subject, he believed that his duty lay with the British. Nor, as yet, had he come to his philosophy of non-violence.

Gandhi offered the help of the Indians of the community, with their approval. At first this was refused, but when the war was going badly for the British, the assistance was accepted by their South African officers and an Indian Ambulance Corps was formed. Consisting of 1,100 men, with Gandhi as its unofficial leader, the group did useful work for six weeks and won praise even from some of the people who had opposed the Indian immigrants in the Durban demonstrations of 1897. Gandhi was awarded a war medal, the first of several to be given to him while he was in Africa. In these activities he wore a uniform consisting of a wide-brimmed hat and loose-fitting, five-button, two-part suit, with shoulder epaulets, and a red cross on a white arm band. These regalia were in sharp contrast to his London nattiness, but even more so with the clothing he was to wear most of the rest of his life.

Near the war's end in 1901 he decided that he should respond to the requests of friends in India to return to his own country. Reluctantly he promised to come back to Africa if within a year he was needed. Costly gifts of gold, silver, and diamonds were showered on the Gandhi family at the farewell, but with their consent he refused them all and asked that a trust in favour of the Indian community be set up with them instead. Acceptance of jewellery and other such gifts was a contradiction to one who more and more believed in the virtue of the plain life.

The Gandhis sailed for home to engage in political activity, to travel to Burma, and to visit various parts of India. They were to realize as never before the hardships and the poverty of their people and to be shocked at the political corruption and the miserable conditions under which people had to live.

## A NEW CRISIS

THE RETURN to the homeland was not to be for long, for a new crisis arose in South Africa. But before that happened Gandhi had a chance to see how the Congress group in India was working and what problems his people were facing. He was particularly influenced by Gopal Krishna Gokhale, a noted political leader of that time in India and president of the Servants of India Society, an organization founded by Gokhale himself. Its members were pledged to devote their lives to the service of India and were supported to do this by the society. Still in existence, it is a vital social force.

Gandhi stayed at Gokhale's home in the Calcutta area for a month, and through this visit became acquainted with the life of the Bengali people. It was Gokhale, whom Gandhi used to consider his guru or teacher, who convinced him that he should again try to take up law practice in Bombay, but Gandhi was not eager, for he remembered his earlier, unhappy life as a lawyer there. But he agreed and opened an office. He was about to settle down when he received a cablegram from South Africa, telling him that he was needed and holding him to his promise. What was wanted was his help as one of a committee to wait on Joseph Chamberlain, Secretary of State for the Colonies, who was planning to visit Africa.

Arriving at Durban just in time to draft the document to be submitted, Gandhi was able to go on the representation committee from that state. The British official admitted that the Indian residents of Natal had grievances, but denied that he could do anything about their troubles. Disappointed, the Indian leaders nevertheless prepared another statement, to be presented

when Chamberlain reached the Transvaal. This was done, but not without calculated delays and insults from local British officials to make it difficult. Gandhi was prevented from leading the deputation but the rest of the group managed to see Chamberlain.

Gandhi now decided to set up legal practice in Johannesburg and, somewhat to his surprise, was permitted to appear before the Supreme Court of the Transvaal. He made no fuss about his clothing. He still dressed conventionally—a black cap, like a small beret, a high collar, a tie, a long, buttoned jacket, and he still had his black moustache, dropping in a curve to each side of his mouth.

But he was further simplifying his manner of life if not also his appearance. He was thinking through his religious view-point. He placed more and more of his faith in God. Furthermore, he began to experiment with natural cures for illnesses rather than be so dependent as he had been upon medicines.

"I believe that man has little need to drug himself," he later wrote of this period in his life. "Nine hundred and ninety nine cases out of a thousand can be brought round by means of a well-regulated diet, water and earth treatment and similar household remedies."

Some years after he began his health experiments Kasturbai, who was seriously ill with pernicious anemia for three months, was operated upon in Durban. The doctor telephoned Gandhi, who went by train to Durban from Johannesburg in great concern for her, and found her appallingly thin. He learned that the doctor had given her beef tea, which disturbed him, with his views about vegetarianism. He moved her in drizzling rain to the Phoenix colony he had established and the doctor withdrew responsibility for her as a result. But Gandhi knew what he was up to.

He put her under his own treatment. She began again to lose

blood. He begged her to give up the use of salt and pulses in meals. But Kasturbai had little faith in his remedies and instead challenged him to give up those same foods himself.

"You are mistaken," he said.. "If I was ailing and the doctor advised me to give up these or any other articles, I should unhesitatingly do so. But there! Without any medical advice, I give up salt and pulses for one year, whether you do so or not."

Now Kasturbai pleaded with her husband not to make such a promise but he would not retract a vow taken in earnest.

"It will be a test for me," he said, "and a moral support to you in carrying out your resolve."

He abstained from salt for ten years.

Kasturbai recovered. He remained at her side constantly, fed her at intervals lemon juice and no other food or drink. Then, gradually, he added fruit, milk, vegetables without condiments, and cereals. Her health returned slowly, but there was no relapse. This event was considered almost a miracle in those days, for pernicious anemia was thought to be one of the fatal diseases. Her doctor had given up hope but Gandhi had cured her.

Not only did he use simple medical treatments but he also cancelled a ten-thousand-rupee life insurance policy because he believed that God would take care of him and his family. He became less and less concerned about his stakes in the middle class. He increased the amount of work formerly left to others, all the time continuing to help in the fight for the elementary rights of the Indians of South Africa, hoping at least to preserve what they had achieved in their life there. Part of this effort included starting a newspaper, *Indian Opinion*, which was to become a powerful weapon in the fight for their rights as well as the first of several publications he was to begin in his lifetime.

One day at this time a friend left a book with him to read on a train journey. Titled *Unto This Last*, it was by John

Ruskin, the English social reformer and art critic who had died just shortly before the book came to Gandhi's attention. He found that he could not put it down once he had begun reading it. That night he could not sleep because the ideas in it had set his mind racing. He determined to change his life "in accordance with the ideals of the book", as he later put it. What were those ideas? Gandhi summarized them:

That the good of the individual is contained in the good of all; that a lawyer's work is as valuable as a barber's, since both have the same right to earn their living from their labour; that a life of work (such as that of a tiller of the land or a hand-craftsman) is the best life.

He was stirred so deeply by this philosophy that he moved to Phoenix, a farm colony he established in an effort to carry out in daily practice the ideals set forth in *Unto This Last*. He was unable to stay on the farm, however, because of the work he had to do in Johannesburg, so he left the printing of *Indian Opinion* in the hands of a business manager at Phoenix, visiting the colony only briefly.

His views about marriage had been changing also and as a result he decided in 1906 to take a vow of celibacy, which in India is called *brahmacharya*. Kasturbai understood his views and shared with him this ideal of achieving self-control. His resolve came about, he said, because he could not "live both after the flesh and the spirit".

More than ever Gandhi threw himself into the good causes for which he was working. He devoted all his money to the effort to help the Indians in South Africa. Now he had another motive: he was spurred on by learning of proposed new legislation which would discriminate still further against his people, such as fingerprinting and photographing them. Their homes would be subject to entry by police and they could be challenged at any time to produce their registration certificates.

Gandhi became discouraged at times. By 1906, after all, he had been working without success for a dozen years to bring elementary civil rights to the Indians. So far he had failed to influence many white people to treat the Indians properly, for they still did not have the vote nor could they serve in government.

All his philosophical conclusions were grouping themselves into a major view-point which was to influence the world. That view-point had to do with the manner of the struggle of the Indians in South Africa to achieve their rights. Their method was at first only that—a means, a device, a strategy. Then it became the basis for a way of life. This view-point was called *satyagraha* or non-violent direct action. Soon we shall see this powerful idea at work in Gandhi's life.

## SATYAGRAHA IN ACTION

IN SPITE of all that Gandhi and the other Indian leaders in South Africa did, the campaign against the bill which would force Asians to register failed. The legislation was passed in 1907. But the more important result was that the *satyagraha* activity went on all the same. The next policy was to resist the unjust law, using the new method.

Gandhi was a symbol of the *satyagraha* campaign. One of his earliest biographers describes him at the time as being small, thin and with a "refined, earnest face". His skin was dark, he had a smile that lighted his face, and "a direct, fearless glance". Dressed as a *satyagrahi*, or practitioner of non-violence, he went barefoot, wore a white *dhoti* (a length of cloth tied around the waist and drawn between the legs), a white jacket that had a high collar, wrist-length sleeves, and ended a few inches above the knees. A knapsack was suspended under one arm by a band from the opposite shoulder across the chest and back. He also carried a stave about five feet long. An odd outfit for a fighter, but this was no ordinary warrior using ordinary weapons.

A Passive Resistance Association was formed. Under its leadership almost the entire Indian community in the Transvaal boycotted the registration offices and picketed them. The next insult to the Indians was the passage of an Immigration Bill by the Transvaal legislature to prevent more Indians from coming into the state.

Of course Gandhi also protested against this bill. With twenty-six others, he was ordered to leave Johannesburg, which they refused to do. Instead, they pleaded guilty to failure to

register and Gandhi astonished the court by asking for the heaviest penalty, as the leader of the opposition, and he was sentenced to two months' imprisonment. This was the first of many imprisonments he was to undergo in his life-time.

But he was soon joined by dozens of other passive resisters against the legislation. Their attitude and conduct so impressed General Jan Christian Smuts, the Boer military leader who was Minister of Finance and Defence, that he said the registration act would be removed if the Indian objectors agreed to register voluntarily. This plan Gandhi accepted. But to carry it out was another matter, for he encountered violent objection from the warlike Pathans. These Indian people from the mountainous north-west frontier of India had settled in the African Transvaal years earlier.

One of these Pathans accused him, at a public meeting in Johannesburg, of having "betrayed the community and sold it to General Smuts for £15,000".

He went on to threaten Gandhi.

"I swear with Allah as my witness that I will kill the man who takes the lead in applying for registration," he said.

Gandhi defied him and said he would apply and allow himself to be fingerprinted.

"Death is the appointed end of all life," he said calmly. "To die by the hand of a brother, rather than by disease or in such other way, cannot be for me a matter of sorrow. And if, even in such a case, I am free from the thought of anger or hatred against my assailant, I know that that will redound to my eternal welfare, and even the assailant will later on realize my perfect innocence."

He chose February 10 for the registration and was the first. When he went to his law office that morning he found a crowd of the giant Pathans. He walked into the room and then, with friends, started towards the registration office. He had just

about reached there when one of the Pathans, a legal client of Gandhi's named Mir Alam, spoke to him.

"Where are you going?"

"I propose to take out a certificate of registration," answered Gandhi.

He was immediately hit, the blow striking his head. He cried out in his own language, Gujarati.

"Hey, Ram" he said, this cry of "Oh, God!" coming as he fainted and fell. Other Pathans then kicked him as he lay on the ground before friends helped him and he was carried into a nearby office.

When he regained consciousness he had wounds on his cheeks and lips and complained of pains in his mouth and ribs.

But he refused to prosecute the attackers.

"They should be released," he said. "They thought they were doing right, and I have no desire to prosecute them." He inquired particularly after Mir Alam, who had been arrested with the others who had assaulted Gandhi. He was sentenced, nevertheless, to three months' imprisonment.

Gandhi also asked that the Registrar of Asiatics come so that he could be fingerprinted, as he had set out to do.

Gandhi's solicitude for Mir Alam was appreciated. He went to India and after his arrival wrote to Gandhi.

"...I hope you are well. I have got an account of the Transvaal happenings published in a Gujarati newspaper," he wrote to the man he had attacked. "On reaching the Punjab I shall get it published there as well. Kindly let me know if the Government comes to an agreement about the law. I hope you will be good enough to give me all the news about the court case....When I get to the Frontier I shall talk to my friends and shall do what I possibly can. I shall do my best and shall go to Afghanistan and acquaint people there with the Transvaal happenings. My regards to Mr. Kachalia...and all others

in the organization. Kindly read this letter at one of its meetings."

The *satyagraha* spirit was at work; Gandhi had won a victory over violence.

"He was nursed for several days at a friend's home in Johannesburg; that house became a Mecca for Indians concerned about their champion's welfare. Several more attempts on Gandhi's life were made later, but each time his companions protected him.

General Smuts, who had promised personally that the Registration Act would be revoked if the Indians participated voluntarily, broke his word and the Act was not repealed after all.

In response, the Indians burned their registration certificates in a big bonfire. Newspapermen wrote of the action as a sort of Boston Tea Party. Instead of removing the old legislation the Government passed even more restrictive laws, approving one piece of legislation that would keep Indians out of the Transvaal altogether.

Defiance met this new move as well. Natal Indians entered the province and were arrested. Others, already in the Transvaal and there called "the locals", became peddlers without licences and courted arrest by this defiance. Once again Gandhi, whom his people now began calling *bhai* or brother, was put in prison, this time alongside vicious criminals, and was set to work at digging up hard ground. He accepted this strain and pain cheerfully, however, and in his little spare prison time read the Indian religious classic, the *Bhagavad Gita*, the works of John Ruskin, and books by the American philosopher, Henry David Thoreau. But except for the times when he wore the clothing of the *satyagrahi*, he still looked like a lawyer rather than the social reformer he was, wearing high stiff collars and plain business suits.

The Government's next move was to deport some of the

friend who bought a fruit farm of 1,100 acres about twenty miles from Johannesburg and let the Gandhi family and about seventy other Indians use it rent-free.

## TOLSTOY FARM

HAVING BEEN strongly influenced by Leo Tolstoy, Gandhi naturally gave the famous novelist's name to the farm and led the colony in a programme of being independent which would have pleased the reformer after whom it was named. In attempting to be self-sufficient—in our time it would have been called a "do-it-yourself programme"—the Indian people who lived at Tolstoy Farm, including Gandhi, learned the shoemaker's trade among many others.

Gandhi often walked the forty miles to and from Johannesburg in a day, learned one trade after another, took part in digging and planting, and was an especially hard worker at carpentry. He put on blue overalls and helped build a house for one of the farm leaders, hammering day after day in the burning sun until the job was done. He remained at Tolstoy Farm until 1911 doing such work and also experimenting with various social and dietetic ideas.

Co-education was the subject of one of these experiments. He sent mischievous boys and timid girls to bathe together, after explaining to them the duty of self-restraint. The bathers went in a group. Solitude was always avoided and Gandhi himself was there, usually, to supervise the bathing.

He slept on an open verandah, with the boys and girls spread around him. There was not a cot on the farm; everyone slept on the floor, still the usual way among many people in India, who cannot afford the luxury of beds. Each sleeper had two blankets, one to lie upon and the other to cover himself with, and a wooden pillow.

The co-educational experiment did not work with absolute

smoothness, but was remarkably successful under the circumstances. There was co-operation, in learning as well as everyday living.

Drugs were given no place in the farm programme. Although it was distant from a big city, no drugs of any sort were kept on hand. In those days Gandhi's faith in nature as a doctor was complete. No case of illness calling for a doctor's help occurred. Gandhi's faith in nature made a wide appeal, and even outsiders began coming to Tolstoy Farm to get his treatment.

He himself was learning during all this experimentation and not only in the realm of such practical work as carpentry. One lesson was in honesty.

A man who needed money asked Gandhi for a loan of £300. Having none himself but sympathizing with the desperate man, Gandhi let himself hand over money belonging to the Natal Congress which had been put in his care. As soon as it was done, he was upset with himself.

"That night I could not sleep," he later said to a friend when describing the incident. "I wondered why I should have committed such a sin. What right had I to take money out of a public fund even out of affection for someone? If that money was not returned soon and if I were suddenly to die, how would I then repay the debt? These thoughts filled me with anxiety. I turned my mind to God and determined to collect that money as early as possible and never again to allow myself to use public fund money for anybody. Then only was I able to go to sleep."

On arriving at his office the next day he received a telegram about a case in which a group of Indians were being accused of crossing the border between Natal and the Transvaal; his help was needed in their defence. He went to the village where the ninety were being held, pleaded their case before the magistrate, and they were acquitted. His fee for this enabled him to repay

at once the money given to the man who had needed it so badly.

That same year the South African Government announced that it would repeal the racial bar against Indians, saying it would substitute educational tests. The *satyagraha* prisoners at the same time were released from their cells. But the tax on the ex-indentured labourers continued and the race barrier against immigrants was upheld, too.

The Supreme Court brought up a new problem by ruling that all non-Christian marriages were illegal. Hindus, Muslims and Parsees all were affected by this, for as a result their children became illegitimate.

The *satyagraha* movement, spurred by this latest discriminatory action, tried in earnest to get a settlement with the Transvaal government with only about sixty *satyagrahis* making the attempt. Kasturbai and fifteen other Indians entered the Transvaal from Natal and were arrested because they did not have permits to cross the border. Eleven others moved across from the other direction—the Transvaal to Natal—and were arrested in turn, but not before Natal Indian miners went out on strike in their support.

The mine-owners cut off the miners' water supply and electricity, in retaliation and in an effort to bring the strike to an end. This action rendered the 2,500 illiterate mine workers not only jobless but also destitute. Gandhi inspired them to march towards Tolstoy Farm. He, too, was arrested, soon bailed out, and re-arrested, bailed out once again, and then arrested all over again.

On the third arrest he was tried and fined £60 or awarded nine months in jail, so he returned to prison. The marchers were then arrested, put into special trains for deportation to Natal, and jailed in their own state. When they were sentenced to work in the mines, they refused and were whipped.

In protest, other Indians in Natal went on strike, and they also were punished brutally. Gandhi was transferred to another jail and manacled.

News of these happenings soon reached Lord Hardinge, Viceroy of India, who condemned the measures of the South African Government as not those of a civilized country. He asked for an inquiry into the charges of atrocities. This unexpected support for the Indians in South Africa encouraged Gandhi and his people.

A three-man commission was appointed, but it lacked an Indian representative. Not only that, but also two of its three members were known to be anti-Indian in view-point. Nevertheless an agreement was signed and the Indians gained certain of their demands, including removal of the £3 tax, legalizing of Indian marriages, acceptance of a simple certificate as evidence of the right to enter South Africa, and a number of less sweeping matters. But some Indian aims still were not gained, such as the right to purchase land and the removal of their segregation in towns and cities. The *satyagraha* movement was called off because of the progress made just eight years after the struggle began.

But there was to be no peace. New acts of racial discrimination followed in 1914. Some of the courageous leaders had died. Gandhi by now had sailed again for India and his leadership in non-violence was needed badly. The Natal Indian Congress that he had established was weak without him.

By now Gandhi's work in Africa had become widely known in India, visitors from his country to Africa having carried back the news of his able leadership. When he arrived in Bombay on January 9, 1915, he was welcomed with appreciation. But before he left Africa he performed a characteristic act. He gave General Smuts a pair of sandals which he had made in prison. Smuts wore these for twenty-five years or until Gandhi

was 70. He then sent them to India, as a token of friendship, writing:

"I have worn these sandals for many a summer...even though I may feel that I am not worthy to stand in the shoes of so great a man."

Back in India again, Gandhi nevertheless felt uncomfortable among the well-to-do Indians who honoured him and Kasturbai. He remained modest, although he was given a gold medal by the Government of India. Not yet was he considered a rebel by the British rulers of his country.

He and Kasturbai went about the cities of India they visited dressed modestly. Mohandas wore a turban, *dhoti* and long top cloth, and shawl—all white, his dark eyes and wide, black moustache presenting a sharp contrast. Kasturbai was often in a slightly ornamented white *sari* and blouse or *choli*, with a bangle on each wrist. Both went barefoot much of the time. As Madeleine Slade (later known as Mira Behn), the British woman who altered the course of her own life to follow that of Gandhi's in his social reforms, years after wrote:

"Not that there was anything imposing about his physical appearance, or striking about his manner of speech; indeed, it was the perfect simplicity of both which held one. Here one was face to face with a soul which, in its very greatness, made the body and speech through which it manifested itself glow with gracious and natural humility."

The Gandhis visited Porbander and Rajkot, with which they had old associations. They went to see Rabindranath Tagore, the great Indian poet who was later to win the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913. At Tagore's cultural centre in north-east India, called Santiniketan, Gandhi spent some time with the poet and with C.F. Andrews, Winstanley Pearson, and D.B. Kalelkar, all of whom had assisted him from India in his work in South Africa. He also visited Calcutta and the cities of Burma

to the east. Already he was being followed by seekers after his *darshan*. To receive *darshan* means to be in the sight of a highly respected person; it is thought still by millions of Indian people to be a form of blessing upon someone so favoured.

India's British rulers were now becoming involved in the World War of 1914-18. Gandhi decided that he did not want to push political action that would have made matters difficult for the British; in fact, he decided to make no attempt to enter politics at all for the time being. By 1916, he was expressing the hope that India would get her own government after the war if she co-operated with Britain at that vital time in the Empire's history. He was still far from the political controversies of the day in India, such as the negotiations between the Indian National Congress and the All-India Muslim League. Pakistan was yet to be born years later in 1947.

During 1916 he went to Champaran, in a province named Bihar, to bring about correction of what he considered an injustice to the tenants on indigo farms owned by both Indian and British planters. He was arrested while investigating conditions because he refused to obey an order to leave. The Bihar government, however, considered his arrest a mistake and ordered his release.

Gandhi next made a careful study of the situation, getting evidence systematically from the authorities as well as the *raiayats* or peasants. As a result of his fact-finding mission, a government committee recommended changes that brought concessions from the planters.

Lack of education, Gandhi decided, was the root of the trouble for the farmers. So with the help of family and friends he started an educational programme by opening schools in the villages of Champaran. Here the *raiayats* were taught to read and write, instructed in elementary hygiene and sanitation. Some of the textile mill workers in Ahmedabad went on strike

for higher wages, so Gandhi helped them to learn new trades while they were out of work. The strikers, for their part, helped him in the sanitation drives. Gandhi hoped that these labourers, five to ten thousand in number, might be able to gain their objectives through *satyagraha*, but the spirit of the movement did not infect them. He went on a hunger strike, so as to rally the workers to *satyagraha*, and won his point. They took a pledge to be *satyagrahis*. After three more days of fasting he agreed to compromise terms and the striking mill workers gained their demands from the millowners.

An important part of this victory was that the owners agreed to arbitration. For this was the first time this principle was used in India's industrial history. Later, Gandhi admitted that his fast was really coercive, since he knew the mill operators personally and they were his friends. That is, had he been a stranger to them, his risking of his life in a fast might have left them indifferent.

A few years later, as a result of Gandhi's support of the mill strikers, an Ahmedabad Textile Labour Association was formed. In time this pioneer Indian labour union organization came to operate its own facilities, such as hospitals, libraries, banks, schools, and a newspaper. Also, it became active in various types of social reform, including training of its members in new occupations, so that they would not starve if they lost their jobs.

After this significant event Gandhi was drawn into another place of tension, a revenue dispute in the Kheda district, Bombay Presidency, as it was then called. He led a campaign against paying what he and the peasants there considered an unfair tax.

But he did something else, and this led to much controversy: he helped to recruit for the British in the war. That action was in contradiction to his views on non-violence. But he had an answer.

## HEROES AND COWARDS

PARTICULARLY DISTURBED over Gandhi's apparent support of the war method was his close British friend, C. F. Andrews, among others. But Gandhi never fought in the war; what he did was to help enlist men. He said that if one benefited from living under a government based on force, one was bound to help that government in a war or one must non-co-operate and "renounce to the utmost of one's capacity" the privileges it offered. Kirby Page, an American believer in non-violence who also knew Gandhi, later said that Gandhi was so free of reliance on violence that he practised better than he preached.

It must not be thought that Gandhi at any time advocated cowardice. He did not want cowards to be attracted to his philosophy of non-violent resistance to evil. "I do believe that where there is only a choice between cowardice and violence, I would advise violence," he said. Cowardice he believed to be demoralizing, but non-violence never so.

Some persons have used this statement about cowardice and violence to justify nuclear warfare or at least to declare that Gandhi accepted or condoned it. So an American Quaker turned to Vinoba Bhave, the disciple of Gandhi who has been trying to carry on his ideals in India, for interpretation of Gandhi's statement, for Bhave knew Gandhi well. Late in the 1950's Bhave explained that the statement must be thought of in the light of the total meaning of Gandhi's life. It was made only once and never repeated, he pointed out. It has been over-emphasized and has been used to distort Gandhi's views. In other words, it is not central to Gandhi's philosophy; it was uttered long before war had reached the point where it could

obliterate all of mankind through use of scientific means never dreamt of in Gandhi's most active time.

Gandhi was having his health troubles meanwhile. An attack of dysentery seized him but he refused medicines, for at that time he did not yet believe in them in the slightest and thought he would die. Ice treatments (applying ice) helped, as did goat's milk, the drinking of which he excused by saying that he had vowed not to drink cow's milk. He was now thinner than ever, his hair becoming more and more sparse.

But by 1919 the need for a new civil crusade had presented itself. This was in opposition to the Rowlatt Bill, which was being pushed by a committee of the same name. It became law despite opposition from the Indian leaders.

The first bill was intended to control so-called crime, political violence, and sedition and to set up trials in secret by special courts without right of appeal. It also provided for preventive detention, that is, the arrest of anyone on suspicion alone. It was intended, in addition, to demand security from persons who might commit offences and it punished persons who were found to possess seditious material. It also could order suspected persons to live in certain areas or refrain from taking certain actions.

All the Indian leaders were against this legislation as being repressive and a curtailment of civil liberties.

Gandhi decided therefore to use *satyagraha* techniques against the legislation with the hope of getting it repealed. The campaign he launched lasted seven weeks and was the first nationwide movement of its kind. The *satyagrahis* were pledged not to obey the Rowlatt Act and certain other laws, such as those relating to the salt tax and the press.

During the campaign Gandhi toured India, establishing the Satyagraha Sabha in Bombay as headquarters for the movement. This group began teaching constructive work methods. It

became a corps of *satyagrahis*.

He next called a *hartal* for one day; this was a national strike in which the people were to fast and to pray as a way of making their protest known. All business also was to close on that day. The *hartal* took place on April 6, 1919. It was effective in Bombay, where books and papers were sold in defiance of the Government. In Delhi, however, it was held by mistake too early, on March 30 and did not go on as smoothly, for there was some violence on both sides. Violence also occurred in other cities and it was evident that the people had not been properly and fully trained in the new technique of resistance. Sometimes the violence of the *satyagrahis* developed from the tactics of the police. In any case, the *satyagraha* campaign failed.

Another fast was then undertaken by Gandhi as what he considered a penance for his misjudgement, as he thought of it, of the people's readiness for *satyagraha*. The campaign was called off after the fast, which lasted three days.

But even worse violence was to take place soon thereafter. This was at the city of Amritsar in the Punjab, a province in the north of India. It occurred on April 10 and 13. On the latter day a crowd of unarmed Indian people were fired on by troops, who killed about four hundred and injured three times that number. The British military leaders had feared a conspiracy and a mutiny. The slaughter became an internationally notorious case, especially when no such plan of mutiny was ever proved. As a result of the amount of non-violence that was practised, however, the Rowlatt Act was never invoked by the Government and the second Rowlatt Bill was never brought before the Legislative Council even though the *satyagraha* campaign had failed in the long run. In Gandhi's eyes it had failed, not because its purpose had not been achieved, but because so many of the *satyagrahis* had given in to violence.

It had become clear, by now, that when Gandhi gave personal leadership to the non-violence movement it remained under control. But the great masses of the people did not have his personal direction and there were no others who could lead them effectively. Gandhi sometimes was prevented by the British Government from going to the places where he was needed, such as the Punjab and Delhi, and these were the places where the movement collapsed.

During that same year the British rulers of the Punjab did still more to enrage and insult the Indian population. One order, issued by Brigadier-General Reginald E. H. Dyer, who was responsible for the killings earlier at Amritsar, was that the Indians had to crawl on the street where a certain European woman had been assaulted. They also were expected to get out of a vehicle if a European passed, so that they could salute him. Their automobiles were taken from them and students were ordered to march ten miles daily in the Indian heat.

Gandhi, who had supported the British in the war at least to the extent of encouraging recruitment of men, became disillusioned about them, although King George V's action late in 1919 in granting amnesty to political prisoners and agreeing to the Indian Reforms Act renewed his faith in them momentarily.

But this new loyalty did not last long. The British rulers of India did not put the reforms into action and the British officers responsible for abuses, instead of being punished or removed for their conduct, became heroes instead.

## INCIDENT OF THE UNTOUCHABLES

GANDHI DECIDED to set up an *ashram* or place of spiritual retreat at Kochrab, Ahmedabad, so as to have a home for the Indian boys who had lived at the Phoenix farm in Africa and for others of his friends and helpers in his various causes.

This *ashram* was destined to become one of the most important in India because Gandhi decided at this time that he should experiment with teaching the people in it to spin and weave by hand. He wished to see if that might not be a way for the Indian populace to do extra work.

It was known as the Satyagraha Ashram and was started with twenty-five people. Soon, because of an outbreak of the plague, it was forced to move to another site at Sabarmati, also near Ahmedabad. With its new start it grew to 150 acres. Various buildings were added gradually, including living centres, a dairy farm, a library, and a dining-room; farm land also was later acquired.

People were beginning to call Gandhi by the affectionate name of Bapu or Bapuji meaning father. He relied heavily on Maganlal Gandhi, his second cousin. Maganlal worked hard to carry out the scheme for the *ashram* as conceived by Mohandas Gandhi, who was busy travelling around India and had to leave much to him.

One day Gandhi decided that the Satyagraha Ashram should accept a family of untouchables, a father, mother and daughter. The Ahmedabad supporters as well as some of the *ashram* members objected to this policy, so Gandhi announced that he would live among the untouchables of Ahmedabad and work as a labourer.



5. MORNING WALK ON THE JUHU BEACH, BOMBAY

6. AT A RECEPTION BY RABINDRANATH TAGORE AT SANTINIKETAN





7. WITH JAWAHARLAL NEHRU AND SARDAR PATEL



An untouchable did not belong to one of the four main castes of India. That is, he was considered to be outside them and thought worthy of doing only menial work, such as removing refuse, known in India commonly as scavenging. Gandhi and other enlightened Indian leaders hated untouchability, which today is banned under the Constitution of India.

Gandhi, of course, could have no patience with such a system as untouchability. "Given a proper conformation with the rules of cleanliness, there should be no scruple about dining with anybody," he wrote later in his famous weekly called *Harijan*, borrowing the name he gave to the untouchables.

He once told an audience that he was "no official, nor a *sirdar*. I am a sweeper, a scavenger, a spinner, a weaver, and a labourer, and I want, if at all, to be honoured as such...." He was totally against untouchability.

His decision, then, to work as a labourer among the Ahmedabad untouchables was by no means odd. But as events developed, it turned out that he did not do so. The *ashram* received a gift of 13,000 rupees from a wealthy Ahmedabad Muslim businessman, this compensating for the loss of support from those inside and outside the *ashram* who objected to the family of untouchables.

Even Kasturbai had opposed the *Harijan* family, since she was an orthodox Hindu. Gandhi had tried to reason with her. He realized, however, that her feeling was so deep-seated that it would be difficult for her to overcome it. But when her husband told her she should abandon her objection or return to Porbander, she accepted the family. She was still the obedient Hindu wife. Also, she had come to be less and less surprised at her husband's beliefs and more respectful of his judgment.

The family at the centre of the controversy consisted of Dada-bhai, a former teacher in a school for his miserable people in Bombay; his wife, Danibehn, and Lakshmi, their small daughter,

whom later Gandhi was to adopt as his own child. Not all the untouchables appreciated Gandhi's attitude towards them, however.

As must any social group that hopes to be co-operative and get along well, the Satyagraha Ashram had a set of rules which Gandhi drew up. These regulations were of a type that were then and are now still practical in an underdeveloped country like India, but would not be practical in every way in such highly industrialized countries as the United States and the United Kingdom. It must be remembered that a foreign government was then in control of India, the caste system was stronger than it is today, and educated people at that time did not like to do manual work, thinking themselves above it.

The members of the *ashram* agreed to:

Tell the truth.

Practise *ahimsa* (non-violence).

Practise *brahmacharya* (chastity).

Oppose untouchability.

Do manual work.

Be courageous.

Be honest.

Do their own work.

This last meant that they were to wash their own clothes and dishes, for example. Young people were trained in what has been called "the moral and emotional controls essential for a *satyagrahi*".

Gandhi was not one to tell others to do what he was not willing to do himself. He had a great sense of cleanliness, for instance, and it made him insist upon it in all his living places. He did not hesitate to set an example by cleaning latrines. He inspected houses and pleaded with rich and poor alike to realize the importance of clean surroundings.

Kasturbai was much upset, as she had been by the untouchable family's arrival and by her husband's willingness to do dirty

work himself, especially if he was in this way serving a person considered of a low caste. Gandhi insisted that Kasturbai should assist in his scavenging.

She was going about the work of cleaning the chamberpots one day but was showing how much she hated doing it. Gandhi said that she ought to do it cheerfully.

"I will not stand this nonsense in my house," Kasturbai said.

Unlike his usual kind self, Gandhi lost his temper, took her by the hand and pulled her to the gate, intending to put her out of the compound. By then she was crying.

"Have you no sense of shame? Where am I to go? I have no parents or relatives here to harbour me. For heaven's sake, behave yourself and shut the gate."

She remained at the *ashram* and continued to assist Gandhi in the cleaning up.

Gandhi's willingness to do this mean type of work was his contribution to the efforts to get rid of the untouchability system. He disliked the idea that one group should be saddled with this job, so all the inmates of the *ashram* took part in it. And he tried to show those who did it that it was socially important and called for proper training to do the job in the right way.

But not all went perfectly well at the *ashram* even when the difficulties with Kasturbai were settled. Mira Behn found it not to be the unified place she had expected. Few of Gandhi's followers were really selfless and devoted to their common cause and ideals. The men had a variety of reasons for joining the group, not always the most admirable ones. Their wives did not always agree, and the children could not be expected to understand the unusual philosophy of the place.

Gandhi was, of course, aware of all this, but would not have it differently, since this should be a typical group of people, and thus better subjects for experimenting with social theories. The difficulties only spurred him on.

For he was a disciplinarian, even though a good-natured and loving one. He was a strict moralist. Perhaps how particular he was can be shown through his own words. Once, after spending some time at the *ashram* and having been annoyed at a lapse from what he considered the best conduct even by his wife, he wrote an article which he entitled, "My Sorrow, My Shame". In it he described three "acts of shame". Let Gandhi describe them in his own words:

"Chhaganlal Gandhi, whom I have brought up as my son and have kept by my side since his childhood, has been caught in the act of committing a series of embezzlements. Had he publicly confessed them himself, my grief would have been much less."

Chhaganlal was his nephew, and had brought some money with him to the *ashram*, which made his action all the more unnecessary. He repaid the theft and left the colony with his wife and two sons. Gandhi could explain the action only by saying that "Nature asserts itself."

The second "act of shame" was something Kasturbai had done. He praised her highly, but explained that at the *ashram* the agreement was that there was to be no personal property like money and valuables. Kasturbai had disregarded this and withheld "one or two hundred rupees which were received as presents from various persons on various occasions", as her husband explained. She was sorry and took a new vow to follow the *ashram* rules scrupulously.

The third act had to do with the vow of chastity. This is Gandhi writing:

"A widow was staying in the *mandir* three years back. All of us believed that she was chaste. A young man brought up in an orphanage was also staying there during that time. We considered him to be a good man, too. He was unmarried then. He developed illicit relations with that widow. This case can be considered to be comparatively old; but it is tragic that such

polution is to be found in an *ashram* in which Herculean efforts are being made for the observance of chastity."

But Gandhi was not a scold, for he went on to say in the article: "I request the reader to believe me when I say that these lapses are a symbol of my limitations. In writing the above lines, I do not wish to convey that I am good and my companions are bad. It is my firm belief that many weaknesses lying deep down in me come out as boils in the above-mentioned forms. I have never claimed to be perfect. The Ashram's sins are echoes of [those of] mine...."

Humble and ashamed as he felt of himself, others did not share that view. He had by now been awarded numerous titles and medals for his humanitarian work.

## THE REBEL

THE VICEROY OF INDIA, during 1920, one day received a letter from Gandhi surrendering the honours he had been awarded for his work in Africa. He did this, he said, because he could no longer respect the Government which had given him those titles and medals.

By that year his faith in the British rulers of India was gone. And the Government, in turn, was convinced that Gandhi was a rebel to be feared. Relations between the Indian leader and India's rulers became worse than strained. The British authorities became concerned because of the effectiveness of the non-co-operation movement and discussed the idea of deporting Gandhi to Burma or prosecuting him. Orders were given to restrict his movements.

Gandhi and the other Indian leaders had hoped that after the war Britain would free India but it did not. He believed that the British were guilty of social, political and economic injustice. On the other hand, the British did not, and possibly could not be expected to, understand his philosophy or his methods. Those methods, in fact, earned him opposition from some of his own people as well. The Indians who did not follow him on all points of his non-co-operation movement were certain moderates, such as Tagore, the noted poet; M. A. Jinnah, the Muslim leader of whom we will hear more later; Annie Besant, the English theosophist and leader of the Home Rule movement in India.

But Gandhi had a combination of courage, imagination and organising ability that is rarely found in one leader. He advocated at this time, to be a part of the non-co-operation movement, the boycotting of the Government-supported or operated schools, of

the courts, and of imported cloth. He urged the replacement of the schools with a type in which Indian languages were used. He asked for formation of arbitration boards. He wanted the people of India to use handlooms and Indian yarn and to produce cloth.

Many then thought, as well as now think, that Gandhi was against the use of machinery. He once told a student that "even the body is a most delicate piece of machinery. The spinning-wheel is itself a machine. What I object to is the craze for machinery, not machinery as such." He meant that it created too much unemployment in India. "...machinery," he said, "merely helps a few to ride on the backs of millions". He added, in talking to the young man, that "scientific truths and discoveries should first of all cease to be mere instruments of greed....I am aiming, not at the eradication of all machinery, but its limitation....The supreme consideration is man...."

During all this he emphasized the importance of non-violence. Hatred of Englishmen or anyone else should not exist, he insisted. He said that violence, lack of unity and the ability of the Indian people to be corrupted only made foreign rule stronger in their country. He wanted the people, therefore, to avoid using intoxicants, to give up their belief in untouchability, and to abandon their support of fanatical loyalty to their own religious community, and to change their attitude towards other social evils, as he considered them. In practice it meant, for example, making cloth by hand. But he was not a fanatic, an unreasonable stickler. The story of the stray dogs told by Mira Behn shows the working of his mind.

At the Sabarmati Ashram stray dogs were becoming a problem. They were found to be showing signs of being rabid. But the Hindu people of the area in which the *ashram* had been set up opposed destroying the mad animals. Gandhi was consulted and he approved killing them, which looked like an inconsistency

until the people were reminded of his view that "...the supreme consideration is man...."

Then came the case of the sick and helpless heifer in the *ashram* herd. She was suffering, she was tormented by flies, and she was dying. Gandhi decided that she should be destroyed as painlessly as possible. But some members of the colony objected, including Kasturbai. So he told Ba, as Kasturbai was often called, and her close companion, Kishi Ben, to nurse the heifer. They soon found that they could do nothing to give the animal relief and consented to having her injected, and the heifer died. When Gandhi wrote about his incident in this weekly *Young India*, many angry protests followed but he was undisturbed by the reaction.

Objectors there were to his views, but in the main he was listened to, because by 1921 he was known among the masses of the Indian people for his saintliness. He was now living strictly according to his vow of voluntary poverty. His humbleness and simple ways of life could not be ignored as examples. He was the incarnation of God to millions of his people. Public worship of him increased. As it did so, it embarrassed him, even angered him at times, for he thought the energy used in shouting his name and struggling for his *darshan* might better have been used in work to gain freedom for India.

He wanted no new religion or church built around him, or, as it has been put, "he wanted no temple for himself". Gandhi deprecated the assembling of any creed from what he had said or done, and "to him there was no Gandhism".

An oft-told story is the one about the day a group of villagers came to his bamboo hut in the small village of Karadi in March 1931. It was a parade, led by singers and ending with a band. In between were the marchers carrying fruits, flowers and money. These offerings were placed before him.

"Our village well," the leader of the marchers said, "was without water for these many years. Your sanctifying feet

touched our soil yesterday, and lo ! today the well is full of water. We pray to you....”

Gandhi interrupted angrily.

“You are fools,” he said. “Beyond a doubt, it was an accident. I have no more influence with God than you have.”

Then the severity in his voice melted and he explained that it was no mystery. “Suppose a crow sits on a palm-tree at the moment the tree falls to the ground. Did the bird’s weight cause it?”

“Go back and spend your time in spinning and weaving to clothe Mother India,” he advised the marchers.

Under such leadership the non-co-operation movement was progressing, but still only in areas and not as yet on a national scale. With hope of self-government within a year, Gandhi worked tirelessly. He slept only four or five hours a day, travelled almost constantly, and had to take care of a large mail with several secretaries as helpers. He continued also to write for his paper, *Young India*.

The official Government attitude towards him had been decided: it was that more would be gained by not arresting him than by making a prison martyr of him. In fact, Lord Reading, the new Viceroy, brought a different spirit to bear on the situation by meeting Gandhi six times during 1921 to discuss the problems of the time.

The British official was impressed with Gandhi, although not able to comprehend his political philosophy. This period of goodwill did not last, however, as the Indian National Congress went on with its work for independence from Britain. Late in 1921 and early the next year, the Government cracked down heavily on it.

About thirty thousand persons were jailed under the Indian Penal Code, volunteer groups were banned, meetings and parades broken up, and the offices of the organization searched. By

now Gandhi had become the chief of the Congress, with complete authority. He still was not using mass civil disobedience because of the fear that it would get out of hand. He warned the Government that because of the mass arrests and persecution of the Congress party people, it would be necessary for the leaders to resort to civil disobedience. Bardoli, in Gujarat, was selected as the place to begin in.

Early in 1922 a clash between the police and enraged crowds created the scene of new disorders that went down in Indian history. It occurred on February 1, 1922 at Chauri Chaura in the United Provinces. After the procession, which was held without official interference, some stragglers were molested by police and called for help. The marchers heard them and turned back. As they did so, they were fired upon.

Running short of ammunition, the police moved into a nearby building for protection. The mob then set the building on fire and the constables had to leave it. When they did, they were butchered and their bodies burnt. Twenty-two were killed.

This atrocity led Gandhi to revoke the civil disobedience campaign plans and to issue resolutions deplored the Chauri Chaura incident and limiting the activities of the Congress party adherents.

Disagreement with his orders came from some of his associates, including Subhas Chandra Bose, Motilal Nehru, and Lajpat Rai, the latter two issuing their objections from their jail cells, and from many others less prominent as leaders of the Indian people.

The Khilafatists—representatives of a movement which was practising non-co-operation against the British Government for not living up to its promises to the Indian Muslims in regard to Turkey—also did not like Gandhi's action, even though it was Gandhi who had launched the movement two years before.

Calling off civil disobedience was interpreted by the British as meaning that Gandhi saw his plans failing and was using the

Chauri Chaura incident as an excuse. The Government could not see that the atrocity committed by the Indian mob was against Gandhi's principles to begin with and could not be sanctioned as part of the civil disobedience movement.

These events meant to Gandhi merely that many people in the Congress did not understand *satyagraha* and that there was too much likelihood of violence in the country for the civil disobedience plan to continue at the moment.

For Gandhi believed firmly that the non-violent person (the *satyagrahi*) could not practise civil disobedience unless he first had willingly and respectfully obeyed the laws of the State. He said that the *satyagrahis* must help the authorities of the State "...ceaselessly...to restore order and curb lawlessness". He spoke persistently against violence but this did not mean the elimination of authority.

On one occasion, the year before, after some of the non-co-operators had forgotten their vows, he had said: "The *swaraj* [freedom] I have witnessed during the last two days has stunk in my nostrils."

Despite the relative quiet that followed Chauri Chaura, Gandhi was arrested on March 10, and put on trial eight days later at Ahmedabad. During his trial he was to make one of his most famous speeches.

## THE JAILBIRD

THE GOVERNMENT based its case on three articles Gandhi had written for his own journal, *Young India*. Gandhi and the publisher, Shankerlal Bunker, did not defend themselves and Gandhi pleaded guilty.

In his speech he traced his change from being a loyal British subject to becoming a determined rebel against the British Government in India. He expressed his disappointment in what he considered Britain's impoverishment of India and her exploitation of its people. He accepted blame for the disorders of the recent weeks.

"The only course open to you, Mr. Judge," he said in his constricted voice and British accent, "is...either to resign your post or inflict on me the severest penalty if you believe that the system and law you are assisting to administer are good for the people."

Six years' imprisonment was the sentence he received. Gandhi considered it light and expressed appreciation for the courtesy extended to him. The entire trial lasted less than two hours. He and Bunker were taken to Yeravda Prison, near Poona. Restricted in various ways, Gandhi had to stay without meeting other prisoners; he was denied a pillow, and a knife except while eating bread.

After a while he was allowed to use his spinning-wheel. Every day he plied it and every morning and evening he prayed. He read steadily, now also. Much of this reading was the works of William James, the American psychologist and philosopher; H.G. Wells, the British novelist; George Bernard Shaw, the Irish dramatist, novelist and essayist; Rudyard Kipling, the

British admirer of imperialism who wrote so much about India in short stories and novels; and Johann Wolfgang Goethe, the German dramatist and novelist. This prison experience, one of many long incarcerations he was to undergo, found him at Yeravda from March 1922 to January 1924. In the Central Prison, there was a two-storeyed building, with cells shaded by slatted awnings and only the width of five cells.

While in this jail Gandhi became ill but even after recovery had bleeding gums and other difficulties. Another prisoner was assigned to look after him. They did not know each other's language and had to use signs in communicating.

One day the other prisoner was bitten by a poisonous scorpion and came to Gandhi for help. He sent him to the jail hospital for assistance, but not knowing what delay might mean, asked for a knife. Only a dirty one was brought, so he refused it and instead proceeded to suck the blood and venom from the wounded finger, for Gandhi could not bear to see his fellow-prisoner in pain.

More and more Gandhi was dressing in fewer clothes, often wearing only a *dhoti* and sandals, if he wore any footwear at all. It was not that prison life made this necessary; he wanted to be less dependent upon earthly belongings. The fasts he engaged in from time to time made him thinner than ever. He now weighed only ninety pounds, often carried his top cloth or a shawl and by a few years later had little hair left on his head. He was wearing spectacles by 1925. His appearance from this time on was a shock to people who saw him for the first time. His ribs showed prominently, he looked rather frail, and what little hair he possessed was grey, as was his moustache. But his almost toothless smile persisted. Sometimes he was so weak that he had to be supported by his companions when he walked. These usually were his nieces or his adopted daughter, Lakshmi.

In jail or out, most of Gandhi's Congress party followers by now were becoming known as Swarajists. After he went to

Yeravda there was disagreement among those followers: they were divided over whether to push civil disobedience or not. Some of the other Congressmen were called "No-Changers". These party debates continued through 1923 with Gandhi in jail. The next year, however, he was transferred to the Sassoon Hospital, also in Poona, to be operated upon after an attack of acute appendicitis. The operation, performed by a British surgeon, succeeded despite the failure of the electric current at a crucial moment.

Meanwhile, Kasturbai was at Sabarmati Ashram. Her husband's illness led to resolutions for his release in various Legislative Councils or provincial governing bodies. Because the division of opinion in the Congress was thought by the British to be enough to keep Gandhi from being what the Government described as subversive, he was freed in early May 1924 on medical grounds.

But Gandhi was not one to be pleased at the reason for his release, saying that illness was not a valid reason. Hundreds of telegrams of congratulation were received by him. He feared that he was soon, therefore, expected to do what he could not do. He went to Juhu Beach, near Bombay, to convalesce, and there thousands of people came daily for his *darshan*, for he was more than ever a national hero now. He sensed a change in the political climate and realized that his former programme—boycotting the courts, councils, schools, military services, and foreign cloth—had not fully succeeded and that the loyalty to the ideal of non-violence had been superficial among many Congress leaders.

*Satyagraha* on a wide scale must be abandoned, he decided, and welcomed the Swarajists, inviting them as a party to be part of the Congress organization and proposing that only the cloth boycott be retained. This was accepted—and interpreted as a surrender to the Swarajists. Soon after he eliminated the boycott of foreign cloth as well.

Early during the rise of Indian nationalist feeling and the non-co-operation movement, Hindus and Muslims worked together well. But by 1923 these groups were beginning to lose their unity. The main rift was caused by the fact that Muslim leaders feared their group would be without security in the development of the revolt against Great Britain.

As early as 1921 some clashes had occurred between Muslims and Hindus. Disagreement arose over attempts to convert one to the other faith and over supposed favouritism to one side or the other by politicians. Critics of Gandhi said that by combining the Khilafat and the non-co-operation causes he had stirred up the masses of the Muslim people to a dangerous point, but he insisted that this was essential to the plan of developing constructive work among all people.

After Gandhi's release, a bad riot broke out in September 1924, between Hindus and Muslims in three towns. The result was that 155 Hindus were killed and the rest of the Hindu population in those towns was driven out.

Real non-violence was not being practised by the people, Gandhi insisted. As a penance he went on a 21-day fast of self-purification at the home of a Muslim associate in Delhi, Maulana Mahomed Ali. From mid-September until well into October he continued this self-punishment. He ended the fast as planned. During those three weeks Hindu and Muslim leaders pledged unity again and condemned violence.

But they were in disagreement once more a few months later. A dozen or more communal riots occurred in the area of north-western India known as the Punjab. Gandhi, meanwhile, was trying to understand the Muslim situation and give the Muslims adequate place in the nationalist effort.

As 1925 dawned Gandhi was not hopeful of a solution to the disagreement. He continued to write in *Young India* on all these matters. Then he made a major decision: he announced his

intention to withdraw from active politics for three years, during two of them to travel widely in India on a campaign of social education of the people.

Wherever he was seen on these journeys he was greeted as if he were a god. The trips were made on all forms of transportation then available in India—train, bullock-cart, lorry. When he walked, which was much of the time, he went into the most secluded parts, jungle and clearing alike. When trains had to be used, he insisted upon travelling third-class, as did the Indian people in general, but sometimes his health made it necessary for him to use the second class. He was, after all, never a hearty man physically. One of the British Government officials who arrested Gandhi during those years called him "a shrimp of a fellow, as thin as a lath".

On these trips he campaigned with speeches against untouchability and in favour of the use of the spinning-wheel to produce *khadi* or hand-spun cloth. He believed that thirty minutes' spinning a day would add a little to the people's income, for they would spin and weave, and the cloth would be bought by the city merchants. More and more clear was the proof of the enormous poverty of the Indian peasantry.

About 43,000 spinners were at work by 1926. More than 3,400 persons were weavers and over one hundred carders were employed in one hundred and fifty production centres in fifteen hundred villages. These people earned nine hundred thousand rupees, at that time about three hundred thousand dollars. It was a good beginning for Gandhi's ideal of a self-sufficient people.

During 1926 he spent the entire year at the Sabarmati Ashram, which now had passed its tenth anniversary. He was publishing his *Autobiography* in *Young India*. Having written it in Gujarati, he had got it translated into English by several close friends. One of his self-imposed disciplines was to remain silent every

Monday so that he could reflect and meditate. He would communicate only by note.

In 1927 he resumed travelling to many parts of the Indian sub-continent, sometimes speaking as often as six times daily. This rigid schedule proved finally too much for him. In March he became severely ill. His blood-pressure was high, and he was nervously exhausted. It was clear that he must have rest and go to a cool place.

Two months in Mysore, a state in south-east India, improved him considerably, so he took up his old schedule. During all this time he was raising money for the fund to be used in promoting the *khadi* campaign which would help the poor.

He himself was one of the poorest of all. His earthly possessions for much of the later part of his life were paltry. They consisted of two pairs of sandals, one of wood, the other of leather; his eyeglasses; two dinner bowls, a wooden fork and spoon; the famous see-not, speak-not, hear-not monkeys in porcelain; his diary, prayer-book, spittoon, paper knives, pen and pencil. To be sure, unlike most of the people virtually without personal property, thousands would offer him anything he wished. Sarojini Naidu, the poetess and Congress party leader who was an admirer of Gandhi's ideals but often dared to be irreverent, once told him that he did not seem to realize how much it cost the nation to keep him in poverty. But many another national leader not only had access to anything he desired but also insisted upon living a showy life, so that Gandhi's sacrifice was still real and sincere.

## MARCH TO THE SEA

NINETEEN TWENTY-EIGHT saw the Indian leaders bring the *satyagraha* movement to life again. The revival was in the campaign against the tax assessment increase in Bardoli, a part of Bombay Presidency. The peasants opposed the Bombay Government action and succeeded in having the rise reduced from 22% to 5%. A Royal Commission to study the constitutional problems was appointed but without Indian members, so the Indian leaders, naturally, urged boycott of the commission.

Gandhi, who also took this position, decided to return to political life at Calcutta, where the Indian National Congress met. But a block soon was put in his path by the British Government. For, the following March he was arrested in that eastern Indian city for burning foreign-made cloth in public. A bonfire had been made of a big pile of it. He was fined only one rupee. Nevertheless, more bonfires of cloth were lighted in many parts of the country.

Unrest mounted widely, especially in labour's ranks. There was some terrorism committed by young anarchists, all against the wishes of Gandhi and his companions. The lawlessness led to greater Government enforcement of the laws. A group of trade unionists and other persons were put on trial in the famous Meerut Conspiracy Case. One of the most dramatic events of this period was the bombing of a train by terrorists while it was bearing Lord Irwin, the Viceroy, but he escaped injury.

Meeting at Lahore in December, the Indian National Congress asked its members in provincial and central legislatures to resign their seats, and the All-India Congress Committee was authorized

to launch a civil disobedience campaign. Its leader, of course, was Gandhi.

His first step in the new campaign was to call for celebration of Independence Day on January 26. Pledges were taken on that date by many thousands not to submit to British rule. If the Congress desired it, there was readiness to refuse to pay taxes. The support for Gandhi's movement was now nationwide.

Gandhi then decided on a march to the sea-shore in protest of the Salt Laws, a journey which has become one of the most famous events of modern Indian history.

The Salt March took place in Western India, beginning at Ahmedabad and ending at Dandi. The climax of the year-long campaign which began in March 1930 and ended in the same month of 1931 had a specific purpose. That was to obtain repeal of the acts that gave the Government a monopoly of salt and a tax. The Indian leaders believed that the levy was unjust, being on a necessity, and that the laws were hard on the poor people which meant virtually the whole population.

Gandhi too held the view that the acts symbolized a government that was not representative of the people and in fact alien and unpopular. The objective, to him, was more than repeal of the Salt Acts themselves. The aim was to achieve complete independence from Great Britain. He believed, as had Abraham Lincoln, that the people had a right to alter or get rid of an unjust government.

The prime leader of the march was Gandhi. With him were various Congress leaders, such as Chakravarty Rajagopalachari, later Governor-General of India; Vallabhbhai Patel, Jawaharlal Nehru, and Satish Chandra Das Gupta. Nehru, who was to become Prime Minister of India, then was President of the Indian National Congress.

In the march to the sea were certain trained members of the Ahmedabad Ashram established by Gandhi. Eventually Indians

who had come from all parts of the country took part in it. Most were Hindus, but some Muslims also joined the group. The business people helped and many women were involved. Ranged against them, as the campaign went on, were officials of the Indian Government, army units, and police.

Volunteer *satyagrahis* drilled in preparation for the march without arms. They took a pledge, drawn up by the All-India Congress Committee in 1930, which read:

I desire to join the civil resistance campaign for the independence of India undertaken by the National Congress.

I accept the creed of the National Congress, that is, the attainment of *Purna Swaraj* (complete independence) by the people of India by all peaceful and legitimate means.

I am ready and willing to go to jail and undergo all other sufferings and penalties that may be inflicted on me in this campaign.

In case I am sent to jail, I shall not seek any monetary help for my family from the Congress funds.

I shall implicitly obey the orders of those who are in charge of the campaign.

The plan was simple enough. It was to lead a march to the sea where the *satyagrahis* would deliberately break the law, that is, prepare salt from sea water. Patel in advance went along the route, explaining the plan to the people, telling them to avoid intoxicating drinks, to do constructive work, and to accept untouchables.

The Congress party announced widely that it planned to agitate for independence through civil disobedience if necessary. Gandhi sent a letter to the Viceroy, Lord Irwin, apprising him of the plan and listing the people's complaints.

Non-violence, he explained, would be used as a force to bring about correction. He asked for a negotiated settlement. If not arrived at, he also said, he would lead a *satyagraha* move-

ment which would include disregard of the Salt Acts. He received only a brief reply.

In *Young India* he said he would not lead civil disobedience if the Government accepted his eleven points, such as reduction in land revenue, abolition of the salt tax, and levy of duties on foreign cloth.

The leaders having had no adequate response from the Government of India, the march to the sea was begun as scheduled. A prayer meeting was held on March 11. The next day Gandhi and 79 other *satyagrahis* left Ahmedabad for Dandi. Gandhi got up at 4 a.m., as he usually did. He led morning prayers. Then the group set out. Gandhi spoke at public meetings in the villages *en route*, spun yarn daily, and attended to his correspondence and his writing for *Young India*.

Like Patel, Gandhi urged the village people to do constructive work, to avoid violence, and to take part in civil disobedience after the Salt Acts had been broken. He explained that the march was a form of penance and a discipline for the start of the civil disobedience campaign. Although now 61 years old, Gandhi walked fastest of all. The villagers strewed the road with flowers and cheered him and his followers.

All the *satyagrahis* were from the Sabarmati Ashram. They ranged in age from 16 to 61. Arriving at Dandi on April 5, they had taken 26 days for the 241-mile march. After prayers, on April 6, they went to the beach and made salt by boiling sea water in kettles. Gandhi announced that the villagers would be taught to prepare salt and the significance of their actions including the fact that they would run the risk of prosecution. These instructions were then published and distributed all over India.

Salt-making was undertaken widely as a result. Shops were closed and *satyagraha* leaders were arrested. Village heads resigned in sympathy with them. Demonstrations of support

were made in many communities. Despite all this, the Government had not taken the action seriously. Some members thought it a childish gesture. Others called it a fantastic project and believed that it would have no serious effect on the Government's salt business, especially with some of the leaders of the movement jailed.

At first, the Government decided not to arrest Gandhi, as a way to oppose and frustrate his plans and to disorganize the *satyagraha* movement, and then changed its decision. Patel was arrested as early as March 7. In early April, just before the march ended, Nehru too was jailed. Motilal Nehru, Jawaharlal Nehru's father, succeeded his son as President of the Indian National Congress.

Then wholesale arrests began to take place. All told, six thousand persons were jailed, including all the prominent Congress leaders. Convicted of violating the Salt Laws were Rajagopalachari, M.M. Malaviya, J.M. Sen Gupta, and Devadas Gandhi, one of Gandhi's sons, among many others. When Gandhi was picked up, his place in the leadership of the campaign was taken by Abbas Tyabji.

In some localities the people refused to pay the taxes. In some, also, rioting occurred—Karachi, Chittagong, and Calcutta particularly. This violence led Gandhi to say that if the *satyagrahis* did not live up to their principles, he would be a *satyagrahi* against them. He wrote a second letter to Lord Irwin, before his arrest in early May, saying that he would go to Dharasana to demand possession of the Government's salt works there, unless the Government removed the salt taxes, arrested him, jailed his party, or the Government used violence. He was arrested on May 5 at Karadi, a village near Dandi, and detained without trial. Volunteers marched on, nevertheless. The raid on the salt depots at Dharasana was led by Imam Sahib, an ashramite from Ahmedabad. Police struck the marchers down, but volunteers

stepped in. First-aid units were organized to revive the victims.

The Dharasana experience was a major test of the *satyagraha* idea. To abide by their pledge the *satyagrahis* must not strike back, must not try to deflect the blows from the police but allow themselves to be struck, and they had to attempt to plead with the police to join them. All this they did so successfully that some police refused to continue the assault. Dharasana was known the world over as a proving ground for non-violent resistance to violence.

Webb Miller, an American foreign correspondent, wrote an eye-witness account which later became famous as a piece of journalism. He described the courage of the Indian users of passive resistance techniques. In his autobiography he describes the scene at Dharasana.

Sarojini Naidu, the poetess and political leader who later became governor of one of India's largest provinces, led the non-violent demonstration. Before beginning it, she called the 2,500 Gandhi-capped men together for prayer.

"Gandhi's body is in jail," she told them, "but his soul is with you. India's prestige is in your hands. You must not use violence under any circumstances. You will be beaten but you must not resist; you must not even raise a hand to ward off blows."

Then the half-mile march to the salt deposits began, with Gandhi's second son, Manilal, among the leaders at the front of the line.

Facing them when they arrived were four hundred Indian police, commanded by British officers. They carried long clubs tipped with steel. Around the salt deposits were water-filled ditches. Within this circle were another twenty-five policemen armed with rifles.

Silently, the demonstrators drew up to within one hundred yards of the circle—a column of them formed, waded through

the ditch on one side and advanced to the stockade. They were ordered to disband—a regulation had just been passed prohibiting groups of more than five to assemble. The marchers ignored this and proceeded.

The five-foot clubs were brought down upon them but no one raised his arm to protect himself from the blows.

“They went down like ten-pins,” the American journalist reported. “From where I stood I heard the sickening whacks of the clubs on unprotected skulls....

“Those struck down fell sprawling, unconscious or writhing in pain with fractured skulls or broken shoulders. In two or three minutes the ground was quilted with bodies. Great patches of blood widened on their white clothes.”

After everyone in the first column had been beaten to the ground, the twenty *satyagrahis* selected in advance as stretcher-bearers ran into the area and were allowed by the police to take their injured to a nearby hut converted into a temporary hospital.

A new column then formed itself and marched forward to receive the treatment the first group had received.

“Although everyone knew that within a few minutes he would be beaten down, perhaps killed,” Webb Miller wrote, “I could detect no sign of wavering or fear. They marched steadily with heads up, without the encouragement of music or cheering.”

The scene repeated itself until all the injured could not be removed, the blankets serving as stretchers became soaked in blood. The non-resistance continued until finally “the police became enraged.... They commenced savagely kicking the men in the abdomen and testicles.... began dragging (them) by the arms and feet.” This went on hour after hour. Sarojini Naidu and Manilal Gandhi were then arrested.

By now it was fearfully hot, 116° in the shade, Miller reported. Patel arrived and gave new heart to the survivors. The American journalist wrote that Patel told his fellow resisters:

“...I cannot understand how any Government which calls itself civilized could deal as savagely and brutally with non-violent, unresisting men as the British have this morning.”

Miller counted 320 injured and saw that a few doctors were trying to administer to them. Two *satyagrahis* had already died of their injuries. Then the demonstration was over.

When the monsoon stopped the raids on the salt works, the civil disobedience shifted into an economic boycott of foreign-made products, such as cloth and liquor, and into disobedience of special laws intended to suppress public meetings and publicity about them.

Gandhi and other members of the Congress Working Committee were released from jail on January 25, 1931. The British Government was by then more conciliatory. But the civil disobedience plan remained in force. Gandhi and Lord Irwin met at Gandhi's request, and held eight sessions in three weeks.

An agreement was reached on March 4. It called for discontinuance of civil disobedience by the Congress and revoking of objectionable laws, the release of civil disobedience prisoners; all this was only part of what the Congress wanted.

These negotiations between the Viceroy and Gandhi were disgusting to Winston Churchill, who described them as “the nauseating and humiliating spectacle of this one-time Inner Temple lawyer, now seditious fakir, striding half-naked up the steps of the Viceroy's palace, there to negotiate a parley on equal terms with the representative of the King-Emperor”.

Gandhi's attitude during and after the negotiations was trustful of Lord Irwin (later to be known as Lord Halifax), and the sincerity of both seemed beyond question. But it was questioned by sceptics, both Indian and British. Gandhi made the agreement as a *satyagrahi* and in line with *satyagraha* ideals. Among those who attacked Gandhi—aside from Churchill—were the anarchists, a minority among those who defied his

ideals as well as the British Government; they were naturally condemned and disowned by Gandhi.

"If you must kill English officials, why not kill me instead?" he asked the anarchists, typically. Such a statement was characteristic of him because Gandhi was able to put himself remarkably in the position of his antagonist. He was capable as few persons have been of seeing a situation from his opponent's angle. We have seen how he reacted to his assailants in South Africa.

Once he wrote to a young editor who had asked him to prepare an article and had sent one of his own to Gandhi on the subject he wanted Gandhi to write about. Gandhi read it, was displeased, and then rejected the article because, as he wrote, "I find that you have not the slightest patience with your opponents' view-point." When the editor, Rammanohar Lohia, clarified, Gandhi relented and wrote a pleasant letter in return.

Gandhi explained that his insistence upon being tolerant was strengthened for him by his belief in prayer, which he considered had saved his life. During a visit to London one evening, he explained his views on this point:

"Prayer has saved my life," he said. "Without it, I should have been a lunatic long ago. I had my share of the bitterest public and private experiences. They threw me in temporary despair. If I was able to get rid of that despair, it was because of prayer. It has not been a part of my life as truth has been. It came out of sheer necessity, as I found myself in a plight where I could not possibly be happy without it. And as time went on, my faith in God increased, and more irresistible became the yearning for prayer. Life seemed to be dull and vacant without it."

He recalled that he had attended a Christian service in South Africa; but it had not gripped him. He could not join in it. The Christian people around him supplicated God, but he could not. He failed "egregiously", as he put it.

"I started with disbelief in God and prayer, and until at a later stage in life I did not feel anything like a void in life," he said in London. "But at that stage, I felt that as food was indispensable for the body, so was prayer indispensable for the soul. In fact, food for the body is not so necessary as prayer for the soul."

The results of the Gandhi-Irwin agreement were numerous. The Salt Acts were modified so that domestic collection and making of salt were permitted for sale and consumption within the villages. Amnesty was granted to persons convicted of non-violent offences in connection with the civil disobedience campaign. The restraining ordinances were withdrawn. Confiscated, forfeited, or attached property was restored. Civil disobedience was ended, including organized defiance of law, non-payment of land revenue, and other legal debts, publication of civil disobedience news-sheets, and pressure on civil and military officials to resign. Finally, Indian National Congress representatives were included in future discussions of constitutional reform and financial credit, defence, federation, and the position of minorities were all covered by the talks.

In general, the campaign had been a non-violent one. The volunteer *satyagrahis* had followed their principles faithfully except for some who cut wires and pulled down fences around salt works, but Gandhi was not leading these marchers. Virtually all violence had been that of the Government forces.

Another important result was that the Congress agreed that it would participate in the second Round Table Conference.

## TO THE ROUND TABLE

SOON AFTER the agreement that resulted from the civil disobedience campaign, Lord Irwin left India and a less conciliatory Viceroy, Lord Willingdon, replaced him. Discontent arose again, especially among those people in India who had not benefited by the Gandhi-Irwin agreement or among those who had suffered from the failure of the British Government to live up to all terms of the agreement, which had been arrived at. Gandhi met the new Viceroy and asked for an investigation into the complaints. A new agreement was reached, in which the Government promised to look into them. Another result was not only that the Congress would participate in a meeting to be called a Round Table Conference in England but also that Gandhi, alone, would represent the Congress group.

The Round Table Conference he was designated to attend was the second of the three sessions so named that finally were held. The first was in 1930, but the Congress group had no representation on it, although a number of Indian leaders attended as representatives of other parties. The Conferences were held in an attempt to find a solution to the difficulties in India; the first gathering showed some disposition on the part of the Labourites to be sympathetic to the Indians' desire for independence.

The trip to the Round Table meeting Gandhi was to attend began for him when he went by train on August 29, 1931 to Bombay. There he embarked for London on s.s. *The Rajputana*. With him went Mahadev Desai and Pyarelal, his secretaries; Devadas, his son; Mira Behn (the Indian name for Madeleine Slade); Sarojini Naidu and M.M. Malaviya, an adviser.

Gandhi made the journey by the lowest class on the vessel and virtually lived on deck. He spun, studied and prayed as usual in his day's routine, and made friends with the English children on board. Friends and followers honoured him at the ports of Aden and Marseilles. When he arrived in London on September 12, he went to a settlement house at whose head was the noted social worker and peace advocate, Miss Muriel Lester. Kingsley Hall was in London's East End, a district of poor people.

He visited this area of the city eagerly, for here were people in distress, as in India. He also wanted very much to go to Lancashire to see the mill town. Mira Behn, Mahadev and others in his group went with him on these trips. As their train neared Lancashire, the crowds gathered. Miss Slade has reported that when people saw Gandhi in the train, they exclaimed:

“There 'e is, look, look. There 'e is, Mr. Gand-eye!”

“Ow are you, Mr. Gand-eye?”

She reports that there was great friendliness despite the boycott in India of English cloth. Gandhi spoke to groups of both workers and employers. Afterwards his listeners were heard to say:

“We understand each other now. It is a privilege to have seen Mr. Gandhi.”

“I am one of the unemployed, but if I was in India I would say the same thing that Mr. Gandhi is saying.”

Mohandas Gandhi was not the only Indian at the Round Table Conference but he was the sole emissary of the Congress party and among the few not politicking and catering to the Government. He dressed normally—for him—but not for English fashion, unlike his student days in England. Before going he had said, in answer to a critic who had declared that the loin-cloth would not become even Gandhi in his capacity as a representative of India:

“As to the dress, I have had many advisers. If I go to England I shall go as a representative and nothing more, nothing less. I must appear not as the English would have me, but as my representative character demands. I represent the Congress because and insofar as it represents Dáridranarayan (God in the form of the poor), the semi-starved, almost naked villager. And if I represent the landed or monied or educated Indian, I do so to the extent that they identify themselves with Daridranarayan and desire to promote his interest. I can, therefore, appear neither in English costume nor in that of the polished Nehrus. In spite of the closest bond between us, it would have been just as ludicrous for me to dress as Pandit Motilalji did as it would have been for him to appear in loin-cloth....I should be guilty of courtesy to the English, if I deceived them by appearing not as I am.”

When the Indian delegates were invited to Buckingham Palace to shake hands with King George, a hint was dropped to Gandhi that he should wear correct court dress on the occasion. He said he would wear only his familiar loin-cloth and if this was not acceptable he could not enter the royal presence. He, however, went covered, as he often was while abroad, with a large shawl.

Gandhi's speech at the Round Table Conference was a simple but forceful one given on behalf of India's millions of poor and its thousands of political prisoners of that time. But it was not effective, for conservative forces were dominant in Britain and at the Conference. Gandhi found that the other Indians for the most part were more interested in discussing the communal problem than what he considered the more important one of drawing up a constitution for India. This failure of his mission naturally caused only dismay at home.

Some satisfaction at least Gandhi had from this trip. In the East End, he enjoyed being with the children. The youngsters called him Uncle Gandhi. Those who lived in the Children's

Home in that part of London sent him a letter. It read: "Have a happy birthday. We all say, 'Have a happy birthday.' We are going to sing a birthday song for you. We are going to send you a present. We would like you to have a birthday cake with a bird and icing on it. Please, will you come here and have your birthday, and we will have our band and play songs about 'Daisy' and 'Away In a Manger' and light candles? Love from Maurice, Stanley, Peter, John, Jean, Alice, Joan, Bernard, Willy, Phyllis, Dorean, David, and love from all the lot of babies and all the lot of us."

With the letter was a little basket with two woolly dogs, three pink birthday candles, a tin plate, a blue pencil, and some jelly candies.

He could not answer this letter while he was still in London, so he took the toys and the letter home with him. A few weeks after his return (and his re-arrest as well) the children received a reply. It read:

DEAR LITTLE FRIENDS:

I often think of you and the bright answers you gave to my questions when that afternoon we sat together. I never got the time whilst I was at Kingsley Hall to send you a note thanking you for the gifts of love you had sent me. That I do now from my prison.

I had hoped to transfer those gifts to the Ashram children. But I was never able to reach the Ashram.

Is it not funny that you should receive a letter from a prison? But though inside a prison, I do not feel like being a prisoner. I am not conscious of having done anything wrong.

My love to you all.

Yours  
Whom you call Uncle Gandhi.

Gandhi's love of children was infinite. One of the young men who served with him and later wrote of his experiences tells of seeing Gandhi one morning in 1930 as he blotted his signature on the Ultimatum to the Viceroy.

"...with one flourish of his hand (he signed the Ultimatum) and with the next started a letter to an untouchable girl of 10 who lived at his retreat 500 miles away, to inquire if she had used iodine on her injured finger."

He met prominent people as well as poor children and mill workers while in the British Isles. Among them were George Bernard Shaw, the Irish playwright and novelist, who considered the Indian leader to be a kindred spirit; Lloyd George, the Prime Minister; Charles Chaplin, the motion picture actor; Gilbert Murray, the famous classical scholar, and various members of Parliament. He became acquainted with some of the Indians living in London as well, including Frank Moraes, an Indian journalist who was to become one of the leading newspaper editors and writers on public affairs in India. He addressed groups of students and teachers at Oxford and other universities and colleges. Then he departed for India.

Two burly British detectives accompanied Gandhi and his party when they left London in 1931. They were supposed to go only as far as Paris, but became so attached to him that they asked to be allowed to accompany the group as far as Brindisi, in the south of Italy, and saw him off safely in the Italian vessel back to India.

On the way through Europe Gandhi visited Romain Rolland, the French novelist, in Switzerland. They had many exchanges of ideas and found that they had much in common. While at Villeneuve he was made much of and spoke to public meetings there and at the famous Swiss cities of Lausanne and Geneva.

Hecklers greeted his pacifist views and his economic theories, and the press opposed him, as it had done largely in England



9. WITH JAWAHARLAL NEHRU







also. But he took this as part of the game.

He stopped at Rome, visited the Vatican art galleries and the Sistine Chapel and was much touched by all he saw, although he had never made much of a study of art or had a big place for it in his life. The Pope would not receive him but the Italian dictator, Benito Mussolini, did.

The interview with Il Duce was short lasting merely ten minutes, but long enough for Gandhi to gauge the Italian leader as one who relied entirely on force to rule.

"He has the eyes of a cat," he remarked after the visit. "They moved in every direction as if in constant rotation. The visitor would totally succumb before the awe of his gaze like a rat running directly into the mouth of a cat out of mere fright.

"I was not to be dazed like that, but I noticed that he had so arranged things about him that a visitor would easily get stricken with terror."

The "arranged things" were various weapons on the walls of the passages to Mussolini's office and the sides of the huge office itself.

Present at the interview was Pyarelal, one of Gandhi's secretaries, who later described it further.

"The Fascist dictator... asked (Gandhi), with a veiled sneer, whether he expected to win independence for India through non-violence and what he thought of the Fascist militarist state which he had built.

"With disconcerting frankness Gandhi told him that, as he saw it, he (Il Duce) was only building a house of cards."

The Italian newspaper, *Giornale d'Italia*, printed a false interview with Gandhi, asserting that he intended on his return to India to resume the civil disobedience movement. Although he cabled London that it was untrue, some British papers and leaders said he was not telling the truth. Antagonism towards the Congress party was heightened as a result of this sensational newspaper canard.

Bombay was sighted once more on December 28, 1931.

Reports of Gandhi's jailings had become commonplace news but they were far from over now. It must be recorded that soon after his return from England he was jailed by the British authorities once more. This time he was taken to a familiar place, Yeravda Prison, Poona. At the same time the Indian National Congress was virtually outlawed, the Gandhi-Irwin Pact dissolved, and civil disobedience was resumed, although there was no plan to do so had the British not precipitated matters. The mounting ill-will between the Government and the Congress, the work of terrorists, and the actions of anarchists and other violent revolutionaries naturally widened the gulf between the Indian patriots and the British rulers.

The British became repressive once more in certain parts of India, not always without cause. But what was really tragic was that the firm measures against violent rebels were used also against non-violent ones. Jawaharlal Nehru and other leaders were arrested once again, and the Congress Committee declared illegal, as were other sympathetic organizations. The All-India Congress Committee's funds were confiscated and its buildings taken over through special legislation clearly intended to squelch the movement and prevent it from spreading. Congress property was sold by auction, including some of that at the Sabarmati Ashram. Certain of the confiscated lands were sold irrevocably.

Another victim was the Press. Under the Press laws, newspapers had to give security, that is, to deposit a sum of money as a guarantee against violation of the law. If a paper published anything that displeased the Government, this money was forfeited and a new deposit had to be made, thus putting the publication into economic trouble or preventing it from continuing its policies and holding its opinions.

By mid-1932 action under the Press laws had been taken against 109 journalists and 98 presses. Offences consisted of

printing material favourable to the Congress party or in any way critical of the Government. Some state governments punished newspapers if they printed pictures of Gandhi and those loyal to him.

Back in Yeravda Prison, Gandhi was now sharing the company of Sardar Patel and Mahadev Desai, his secretary. He insisted on pursuing his usual work. He prayed and spun, dealt with his mail, washed his few clothes, read constantly, and studied astronomy. Desai recalled that this persistence about going on with what he considered his duty to do was sometimes extreme. On one occasion at Yeravda Gandhi's right elbow and thumb pained severely, after about ten years of daily spinning, but he insisted on going on with the work in the prison and keeping to his self-imposed quota of 375 rounds a day. His arm became worse and the doctor ordered him to take more rest. Instead, he changed the wheel and spindle in such a way that he could do the more severe work with his left hand and thus keep up his quota.

During the first nine months of 1932 the Government convicted 61,551 persons of civil disobedience charges. By the end of that year, the Government thought it had quashed the campaign but the restrictive legislation remained in force. Gandhi languished in jail, still not understood by a prejudiced Viceroy, who portrayed him and those around him as politicians. Lord Willingdon did not realize the power of Gandhi's moral force nor did he appreciate his religious attitude.

## CHAPTER XVII

### DISCIPLINE OF THE FAST

FASTING HAS its place still in the religious life of many Americans, but is rarely the practice of political leaders wishing to make amends for their errors or to dramatize a protest. Common in Asia, it has for many years been no less so in India.

Gandhi, long interested in experimenting with diets anyway, had taken an interest in fasting as well during his early years in South Africa. In India, he realized, as he worked for his country's freedom, that the non-violent resister must be capable of all sorts of self-discipline, including that of the palate.

"It dawned on me that fasting could be made as powerful a weapon of indulgence as of restraint," he wrote in his *Autobiography*. He set out to experiment with eating or, more accurately, not eating or using only certain types of food. Vegetarianism was the practice of his family for religious reasons. He also tried living only on water, thus training himself for future trials of self-imposed starvation. He liked to quote these lines from the *Bhagavad Gita*, the sacred book of the Hindus: "For a man who is fasting his senses

"Outwardly, the sense-objects disappear;  
Leaving the yearning behind, but when  
He has seen the Highest,  
Even the Yearning disappears."

Against this background, Gandhi's embarkation on a fast unto death is not difficult to understand. Here was one way to call attention to the misdeeds of a powerful Government, a way with spiritual force.

Therefore on September 13 the press announcement that Gandhi had decided to fast even if it led to his death was not a

totally strange event in India. The fast, begun on September 20, was in protest against a clause in the new constitution which granted separate electorates to the untouchables. He opposed such segregated elections because he believed that they would split the Hindu community. He considered the clause to be discriminatory, for the Harijans would be counted separately, a procedure which would not benefit the depressed classes of people. He had opposed this plan at the Round Table Conference and was abiding by his threat to give his life in opposition to it.

The British leaders, including even Ramsay MacDonald, the Labour party head in England who later was to become Prime Minister of Britain, thought the fast only a political stunt to regain personal prestige. Such an interpretation showed no grasp of Gandhi's philosophy of life and overlooked the fact that he had long opposed untouchability and had tried to help the Harijans in various ways. The act of fasting was misunderstood as a form of coercion. "Fasting was the only way out for the agony of his soul," one of his biographers has explained.

September 20 was set as a national day of fasting and prayer. The untouchables were better treated by the public and a conference of caste Hindus and Harijans was called to plan an alternative voting scheme. Included were Bimrao Ramji Ambedkar, an American-educated lawyer, a champion of the Harijans and himself an untouchable, who favoured separate electoral status.

Next day Gandhi was taken to the Yeravda Prisonyard to spend the day under a tree with Sardar Patel, Sarojini Naidu and Mahadev Desai. Kasturbai also was permitted to join him. The conference sent some representatives to confer with Gandhi.

He became physically weak rapidly through all this, since his fast was still on. A board of doctors feared that he would soon enter what they called "the danger zone". The conference debated and agreed on a plan called familiarly the Poona Pact.

But Gandhi would not give up his fast until the British Government in London agreed to the terms of the pact. The Cabinet approved it after MacDonald, Lord Lothian and Sir Samuel Hoare, who was Secretary of State for India, also assented. The pact provided for a substitute electoral scheme which defeated the original discriminatory plan. Gandhi's action also struck a new blow at untouchability.

Under the inspiration of this success, Gandhi ventured further into journalism, too. He started a new paper, *Harijan*, a weekly intended to promote his campaign against untouchability. He wrote much of what appeared in it. He explained that untouchables were to be called Harijans because they were "children of God". He exposed their maltreatment by the people of the higher castes. He also encouraged the formation of a new national organization for the purpose.

But still he was not satisfied with the progress of his ideals and a new fast and arrest followed this activity. On May 8 he embarked on another fast timed for 21 days. Taken to a private home in Poona, he lived through the starvation period. But on August 1, he was rearrested and sent back to Yeravda, released three days later, and arrested once more on August 7 and given a year's sentence. Another fast in prison was begun on August 16, in protest against interference with his earlier campaign against untouchability.

His health, as a result of this series of fasts, became so bad that he was released once more and he resumed work for the cause of untouchability. The next month, in September, he moved to Wardha, in Central India, and made over the Sabarmati Ashram to the Harijan organization.

Two months later he went on a national tour on behalf of the Harijans and to help in relief work after an earthquake that had occurred and done much damage. He had covered 12,500 miles by the middle of 1934, and collected eight hundred thou-

sand rupees (about \$ 250,000) from the people he saw on his trips—people of all sorts and all ages—for the relief work. But he was not always sure that these journeys were useful.

While returning from a meeting, on an earlier occasion, a villager named Padamsingh, was knocked down by a car in which Gandhi was being driven. When he went to see him in hospital, Padamsingh said:

"I want you to give your blessings to my son if I pass away."

"I undertake to take him to the *ashram* where he would be trained up and taken care of or make the necessary provision for him in his home, as you choose," Gandhi said.

"No, that is not what I want," Padamsingh said. "It is needless. All I want is your blessings," the dying man insisted.

"Death or lesser accidents generally do not give me more than a momentary shock," observed Gandhi in *Young India*, after the death of Padamsingh.

"I should have either insisted on walking or the car proceeding only at a walking pace till we had been clear of the crowd. But constant motor riding had evidently coarsened me, and freedom from serious accidents produced an unconscious but unforgivable indifference to the safety of pedestrians....I have never been clear in my mind that my mad rush through India has been all to the good...."

During the 1934 tour conservative Hindus (known as Sanatanists) organized demonstrations against him, tried to heckle him, and to break up some of his meetings. Back in Poona that June, a bomb was thrown at his group, hurting seven of its members. But Gandhi escaped unscathed.

The civil resistance movement by that year had been suspended entirely by Gandhi, who said that he would remain its sole exponent. For him this was a moral, not a political, decision, at least for the time being.

He left the Congress group. During the campaign nearly ninety-eight thousand Congress members had been jailed; the civil resistance campaign had by no means failed.

## MAN OF THE PEOPLE

VILLAGE PEOPLE in India had affectionate names for Gandhi. Bapu and Bapuji were two of them. But more and more often these villagers—and that meant most of the Indian people, since India was then, as it still is, largely a nation of hamlets—were calling him Mahatma or Gandhiji.

Gandhi was never fond of titles and Mahatma was certainly anything but a favourite. It is a designation conferred on a few men throughout India's history. But it was so widely used in connection with Gandhi that in the Western world most persons believe it to have been his first name.

Mahatma goes back to the ancient literature of India, the *Upanishads*, a collection of metaphysical treatises. There it refers to the Supreme Being and to those who through communion of knowledge and love "become one with Him". Tagore the poet is believed to have first applied the title to Gandhi when he visited one of his *ashrams*.

Although the people called him Mahatma and Mahatmaji, he did not welcome the tribute. On one occasion, he said this about it:

"The Mahatma I must leave to his fate. Though a non-co-operator, I shall gladly subscribe to a bill to make it criminal for anybody to call me Mahatma and to touch my feet."

At another time he wrote:

"There is already enough superstition in our country. No effort should be spared to resist further addition in the shape of Gandhi worship. Personally, I have a horror of adoration. I believe in adoring virtue apart from the wearer...."

"Let no one say he is a follower of Gandhi," he wrote in 1940.

"It is enough that I should be my own follower.

"... I have never even in my dreams thought that I was a *maha-atma* (great soul) and that others were *alpa-atmas* (little souls). We are all equal before our Maker—Hindus, Moslems, Parsis, Christians, worshippers of one God."

Gandhiji—also a term of affection, conveyed through the ending *ji*—in the later years of Gandhi's life came to be the name most often applied to him even as it is today.

These distinctions are made because, with the dying down of the civil resistance movement in the mid-thirties of this century, Gandhi threw himself into work that was to bring him closer to the people.

His relations with the ordinary folk of the country are illustrated by his kindness to a certain barber. This account was revealed when one of the authors of this book discovered an old photograph of Gandhi with a barber and a few lines written by the Mahatma to him. This photograph was taken on November 23, 1939 at Allahabad, when he visited that north Indian city in connection with the foundation-laying ceremony of the Kamala Nehru Memorial Hospital. He was at Anand Bhawan, the family residence of the Nehrus.

Gandhi was not only the political teacher and adviser of the Nehru family but also was father of the house. On many occasions he was consulted by the Nehrus, who valued his advice. Gandhi had told Mrs. Kamala Nehru, wife of Jawaharlal Nehru, that her wish to build a big hospital for the poor at Allahabad would be respected. After her death, according to his promise, Gandhi saw to it that a hospital was built in her name. It was he who laid the foundation-stone thereof.

While he was in Allahabad he was shaved by a barber of that city, Punnilal. During the time Gandhi was in the chair, a Sikh had gone to him to narrate the troubles of the people of the Punjab. The barber said that Gandhi heard the Sikh patiently

and promised to visit Lahore and console the people of that northwestern city. By his side were lying newspapers and a *chaddar* or wrapper.

After the shaving was over Gandhi gave the barber a note, what in India is called a certificate and in Western countries a testimonial or recommendation. It read:

“Brother Punnilal has shaved me well. His razor is country-made and he shaves without soap.”

When Punnilal was asked how he had managed to get such a note from Gandhi, the barber said that it was a great day when he got an opportunity to shave the Mahatma. He added:

“I had no *khadi* clothes to put on but quickly Mr. S.D. Upadhyaya, then Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru’s private secretary, supplied me with *khadi* garments and I donned in spotless white to shave the great leader. As Gandhi saw me, he smiled and said: ‘Are aagaya, too achha bal banata hai’ (“O thou hast come. Thou shavest well”).

The barber’s shrewd business instinct was aroused by this praise and he said that if Gandhi thought this, why not give him a certificate? Gandhi said that that was not necessary so long as he did his work well. But the barber was a greater *bania* (trader) than Gandhi as far as business was concerned and insisted on a few lines from him. Soon, using an Anand Bhawan letterhead, Gandhi scribbled the above note.

Punnilal took home the certificate and with great pride showed it to many people. Later he discovered that someone had taken a photograph of him with Gandhi.

During the shaving session the barber felt somewhat uncomfortable in his borrowed clothes, which did not fit him well. Gandhi detected this uneasiness and asked Punnilal:

“Are you a habitual wearer of *khadi*?”

Punnilal was non-plussed at this. He told Gandhi frankly that he was wearing borrowed garments and was not, it was true,

a regular wearer of hand-spun cloth. Gandhi was pleased with his honesty.

Punnilal was asked how much he was paid by Gandhi for his work, which was to shave his head and beard. Under orders from Mr. Nehru he was paid two rupees, then about 50 cents. Most of the time, Punnilal related, Gandhi was cracking jokes with him and asking about his welfare.

The photograph and certificate became Punnilal's most precious possessions and the pride of his shop. He said that someone had offered him one hundred rupees for Gandhi's testimonial and the photograph, but he would not part with them for any price. He was saving them for his heirs.

Gandhi's jolliness with the barber was not at all unusual. He often made jokes or teased. He was called "buoyantly cheerful" by some persons who paid tribute to him after his death. Another friend said that he had "an elfin-quality". He laughed often. "You will not spend five minutes with this man without laughter," another observer wrote.

When Gandhi was 75 another observer wrote of him: "But I think what most endears him to those who know him well is his acute sense of humour and fun." This was shown when he made a brief visit to Scotland during one of his trips to England. Dressed in loin cloth and top piece, Gandhi saw a Scot wearing plus-fours. He asked the Scot the name of the outfit he was wearing.

"Plus-fours," answered the man from Scotland. "And what do you call what you are wearing?" he asked, looking at Gandhi's *dhoti*.

"Minus-fours," said the Mahatma, with a grin.

## THE MODEL VILLAGE

AN ELEGANT young man from Oxford, wearing a colourful tie, once went to see Gāndhi while he was in London for the Round Table Conference.

The "dainty and dapper" youth, as he was described by Frank Moraes, the Indian journalist who also saw Gāndhi in England at the time, asked pompously:

"And what could I do to help the country, Mahatma?"

After studying him for a moment, Gāndhi replied:

"I would advise you to go to the villages. There is much to be done there. You must set an example to the villagers who know nothing of sanitation. You must be prepared to clean out the latrines and do the work of a scavenger."

Moraes added that "The elegant young man blanched visibly. Even the crease in his immaculate trousers seemed to wilt."

Having left political activity, Gandhi meant all that he told the Oxford lad. He wanted to throw himself into the task of helping the people through village development and industries. The Congress had authorized establishment of an All-India Village Industries Association to be led by him. Its goal was to alleviate poverty.

His insistence years before on the use of the spinning-wheel was in the hope that it would relieve unemployment a little or provide the people with a supplementary income. Now he was ready to tackle the whole problem. Revival of village industries was his solution. Gandhi was attempting a huge undertaking, since most of India's population, then as now, lived in villages. He decided to carry through his ideas by producing a model village.

Selected for the experiment was Segaoon, near Wardha, a typical small and underdeveloped village of six hundred souls in Central India. He used for his own a one-room thatched hut. Cold in winter and burning hot in summer, Segaoon was a typically dirty village. It had neither paved road nor post office nor store. Everyone in it was illiterate, and had (or had just had) dysentery or malaria. Gandhi himself became ill in the place, and was alone in it. Followers soon came to be with him, however, and then a succession of Europeans, attracted by his philosophy of life, sought him out.

Segaoon was renamed Sevagram, when it began serving as an experimental village. Not an *ashram* and so not formally organized as had been the other living experiments; it was instead a headquarters for Gandhi's ideas about village improvement. It was different from Sabarmati in that it was after a time operated by a cohesive group of people who believed sincerely in *ashram* principles.

The Industries Association set up a training school for village workers. Other groups were formed to bring about the improvement of cattle or experiment with education or with problems of nutrition.

All this village activity by Gandhi appeared to some of his colleagues as an evasion of the main political goal: freedom from Great Britain. The Government, on the other hand, considered it a new way to get mass support for civil disobedience. Still others accused Gandhi of denying the importance and value of scientific progress in industry, for he continued to urge the use of the handloom. Gandhi still objected to machinery only because it gave a few persons, he thought, a monopoly on wealth and it would add more to an already too great unemployment. He placed a great value on labour for its own sake. Once he saw a sliver of cotton, less than two inches long, on the Wardha-Sevagram Road. One of his

dants was asked to pick it up.

She thought Gandhi objected to the littering of the road. Later, he asked for it but she had thrown it on a waste pile!

"Don't you realize," he asked, "how much labour has gone into growing the cotton, ginning it and carding it? The man who threw it away was a sinner, no doubt, but you, who failed to realize the value of it, are doubly so." She then retrieved it.

Gandhi then spun it himself. The dignity of labour meant more to his companions after that incident. Such concern for what may seem a small matter is difficult for Western people to understand, but in the unbelievable poverty in which many Indians must still exist all their lives it is of importance.

Criticism of Gandhi was on other scores as well from those who should have seen his aims more clearly than they did. He believed in a society with a decentralized economy and a perfect form of democracy, giving its citizens freedom. The socialists of 1935 in India were among his adverse critics, however, primarily because he did not believe in class war or that such conflict was inevitable. Capitalists, too, opposed him, because he fought social injustice and blamed them for much of it. He objected to industrialization at the worker's expense, and other social evils, as he saw them, such as property. He believed that property—*all property*—should belong to God and be held in trust by men.

Each person in Gandhi's ideal society was to have only what he needed, to work according to his capacity, and to get according to his needs. The rich, under Gandhi's scheme of things, were to give up their wealth for the masses of the people. If they could not be persuaded, then non-co-operation was to be tried. But violence never.

Though there was much writing and conferring with visitors, he continued his village work. Letter-writing occupied him

often. His companions have recalled that he wrote these on all sorts of scraps—used envelopes and magazine wrappers, for example, on account of both convenience and economy. Paper was a scarce commodity in India—it still is. Merchants sell most of their items unwrapped; they cannot afford the wax papers, plastic, or cellophane coverings so common in Western countries.

Gandhi's routine was more rigorous than ever at Sevagram. He rose at three in the morning and answered his mail, which was huge in quantity. He led prayers at 4 a.m. Half an hour later he walked and saw visitors. Then he had his usual breakfast of dates and curds. He was still a vegetarian. He spent about fifteen rupees a month on food. The rest of the time, until eleven at night, he spent on his major concerns. He slept out of doors, refusing to use a mosquito netting, since the poor of India had none but instead put a little kerosene on his face. He slept instantaneously and soundly.

To Sevagram came many famous persons but the most numerous visitors were the village people of India. A group of prominent Indian dignitaries came to see Gandhi one day. When they found him, he was busy giving wet sheet packs and hip baths to two victims of enteric fever.

One of the visitors asked him if he had to do all this himself. "Who else is to do it?" he asked. "If you go to the village, you will find that out of six hundred there, three hundred are ill. How are we to teach these poor villagers except by example?"

Earlier, while in Africa, he had helped save miners when the plague had broken out. In addition to seeing that an empty house was set up as a hospital for twenty-three patients, he had changed and cleaned beds and cheered the patients by staying with them. Gandhi was an expert at certain nursing duties, such as giving enemas, hip baths, oil massages, and applying packs. He could also act as a midwife and helped in the delivery of his sons.

When the new constitution went into effect in the provinces in 1937, India began gradually to get a measure of self-government. Enacted by the British Parliament two years before, it threw Winston Churchill into prominence in India as an opposer of that country's desire for self-rule. Churchill objected as well to any dealings with Indian leaders.

Churchill's concept of India was that of Rudyard Kipling, the novelist, as an imperial colony to be ruled forever by the British and to serve that island empire. He knew little of the India that had heard Mohandas Gandhi's ideas, and had pondered such campaigns as those centred in non-violence to achieve noble ends.

In the opinion of the Indian leaders, the new constitution had limitations that were much to be regretted. Jawaharlal Nehru said that it gave Indians responsibility without power. But it was at least partial democracy. Gandhi, however, recommended that the Congress form ministries in the provinces, and after a statement from the Viceroy that the governors could not interfere with them, the Congress decided to do so in six provinces.

Live simply, be industrious, be impartial, and have integrity, Gandhi urged the ministers. Prohibition and education, two points in the legislative programme, won his attention and support. That October he had an opportunity to explain his educational theories, for a national conference on education was held at Wardha.

During it he proposed that handicraft centres be used as a means for educating villagers, that their own language be the medium of instruction rather than English, that the programme should be based on a span from ages seven to fourteen, and that handicrafts made in the village be sold and the money used for the expenses, in part, of the educational programme.

Ideas of this specific sort created a stir and much discussion as well as not a little opposition. But Gandhi wanted to empha-

size the vocational aspect so as to reduce the great amount of rote-learning and to relate the child to his environment.

The Congress success in gaining some offices, while it was an achievement of a desire all leaders had long entertained, brought with it competition that displeased and distressed Gandhi. Far more important than holding office, he believed, was the work in the villages. He was even more disturbed when the Congress ministers allowed the military and the police—just as the British rulers had done before them—to suppress communal riots by the use of violence. He wanted peace brigades instead. He was living up to what he had said nearly thirty years earlier:

"The means may be likened to a seed, the end to a tree, and there is just the same inevitable connection between the means and the ends as there is between the seed and the tree. I am not likely to obtain the result flowing from the worship of God by laying myself prostrate before Satan. If, therefore, anyone were to say, 'I want to worship God, it does not matter that I do so by means of Satan,' it would be set down as ignorant folly. We reap exactly as we sow."

Rising to a strong position of opposition to Gandhi in 1938 was M.A. Jinnah, the Muslim lawyer and politician. In many ways he was the antithesis of Gandhi. He was immaculately dressed, not interested in religious ideas, and unconcerned with the state of the peasants. He accused Gandhi of being a dictator and of trying to annihilate the Muslims. Yet Gandhi had done much to avoid offending that religious group.

During 1939 Jinnah stressed support for the idea of the creation of two nations out of what then was India, based on the religious differences between Muslim and Hindu. Pakistan was to be made up of the Muslim-dominated areas of the north-east and north-west; the remainder was to be India. Fearing that the Muslims, being a minority group, would be a

voiceless community in India, Jinnah's plan was taken up by the Muslim League.

Appalled by such a proposal, Gandhi could not believe that it had been made seriously. Different religions, he thought and said, did not mean different nationalities or different cultures. He had worked to unite the people of India. This plan, he was certain, would split them in a most dangerous way. Here his belief in non-violence had to stand a new test. The Muslims must not be forced to unite with the rest of India.

With the outbreak of the World War of 1939-1945 in Europe, the Congress ministers resigned, allowing the Muslim League to become more prominent. Gandhi was disturbed not only by the communal conflict but also by the position of the princely states, of which there were 562 at the time. These supported the British and resisted all social change.

Gandhi knew these conditions intimately, for it will be recalled that his father and grandfather had been high in the councils of both Porbander and Rajkot, two of the small princely states.

Not only did those states resist social progress but they also maintained outmoded and backward practices of the feudal system of old Europe. He had not tried to carry out, in these states, the reforms he had pushed forward in the provinces. Why? Because of the difficulty of training the people, who had no freedom whatsoever and would be undisciplined in any civil disobedience movement. He hoped, also, that the people would be influenced by the example of others in the same direction. As the democratic movement developed by this time, however, the people in some princely states sought what their fellow-citizens in the provinces were now obtaining—greater liberty and some increased democratic representation.

Rajkot, where he had spent some of his early years, was the scene of an attempt made by Gandhi to apply his non-violent technique to a problem affecting the people: lack of representa-

tion. Numbering 75,000, they had no voice whatsoever in their government. By the end of 1938 some progress had been made by Gandhi when the *Thakore* or ruler of Rajkot and Patel reached an agreement that amnesty was to be granted to political prisoners and that political reforms would be granted.

When the ruler went back on his promise, however, Gandhi began a fast in Rajkot, breaking it only when an official of the Indian Central Government intervened at his request and ruled in favour of the Rajkot people. But the *Thakore* and his *Durbar* or consellors continued to be unco-operative. Gandhi then decided that he had been mistaken when he had asked for Government intervention and that he had stopped his fast too early. For intervention, he realized, had not been in the spirit of non-violence. As a result, he apologized to Lord Linlithgow, now the Viceroy, and the intervenor, Sir Maurice Gwyer, Chief Justice of India, and asked the ruler of Rajkot to improve the conditions of his people.

The apology was criticized as quixotic and inconsistent. But Gandhi persisted in his view and asserted that this was the way of *satyagraha*, the way of love. He saw even more clearly now that there was not enough training or discipline among the Rajkot people, so he asked them to seek only what they might reasonably expect — freedom of speech, assembly, and press, equality before the law, and an independent judiciary.

He never was disturbed by these charges of having been inconsistent. Some uncharitable critics described him as "an enigma shrouded in mystery" and "a bundle of inconsistencies". His reply was:

"I must admit my many inconsistencies. But since I am called 'Mahatma', I might as well endorse Emerson's saying that 'Foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds'. There is, I fancy, a method in my inconsistencies. In my opinion, there is a consistency running through my seeming incon-

sistencies as, in nature, there is unity running through seeming diversity.

"Friends who know me have certified," he said further, "that I am as much a moderate as I am an extremist, and as much a conservative as I am a radical. Hence perhaps my good fortune to have friends among these extreme types of men. The mixture is due, I believe, to my view of *ahimsa*.

"I decline to be a slave to precedent or practice. I have sacrificed no moral principle to gain a political advantage....I have never made a fetish of consistency."

Consistent he was, however, in his opposition to violence as a means to an end. But he was realistic about the immediate possibilities.

He was once asked about a state becoming absolutely non-violent. Gandhi answered that it could not absolutely "because it represents all the people....I do believe in the possibility of a predominantly non-violent society...a government representing such a society will use the least amount of force...no government...can suffer anarchy to prevail. Hence...even under a government based on non-violence, a small police force will be necessary."

A band of hoodlums once attacked by demonstrating against him at a meeting in Karachi. The men tried to injure him. At a public meeting that same day, attended by a half million, he laughed at the incident and said:

"I keep no bodyguard to protect me. My chest is literally bare. Yet no one can kill me. For my bodyguard is no less a person than God Almighty." He did not, of course, mean that he was superhuman. He meant that his essential ideas could not be got rid of merely by removing his body.

## NEW WAR, NEW PRISONS

BY THE TIME the World War of 1939-45 broke out, Gandhi's faith in non-violence had grown stronger than ever. He thought the weaker nations should use it against the aggressors.

This idea meant to him that the people should be expected to refuse to co-operate and should be willing to die, if necessary, but not to take life. The citizen should be ready to die rather than to kill. He believed that even such dictators as Hitler and Mussolini were not beyond redemption. Everyone, he was certain, would respond to love.

"There is no bravery greater than an absolute refusal to bend the knee to an earthly power," he said, "no matter how great, and that without bitterness of spirit and in the fulness of faith that the spirit alone lives, nothing else does."

To Mohandas Gandhi non-violence was a way of life, not merely a new way to fight a war.

Nevertheless India entered the conflict in 1939, when Britain and Germany declared war that September. The British Government in India had not consulted the Indian ministers or the political leaders, although the Indian National Congress was sympathetic to the Allied cause.

The Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow, asked Gandhi to see him at Simla, the hill station to which Government officials then moved in summer to escape the heat of the plains. Gandhi told him that he had his moral support, since his sympathies were with England and France, but that he could give no more than that. This attitude was in contrast with the one he had held during the World War of 1914-19, when he helped through the Red Cross.

His programme, he had explained, must remain—that India

follow the path of non-violence in resisting her enemies, even though he knew that few of his associates would accept such plans. He must have known how impractical this sounded since the Indian people as a whole had not yet learnt non-violence for the solution of their domestic problems. This fact did not, of course, make his theory wrong. It simply accentuated the situation.

Less than two weeks after war had begun, the Congress Working Committee offered to co-operate at once in it but it sought independence for India as the price. The Government granted little, however. When Germany apparently was on the way to victory and might have threatened India in 1940, the Working Committee asked for freedom only after the war, as the new price of co-operation.

Since the Congress could not accept Gandhi's methods as a way of co-operation with England in fighting the war, it, in effect, set the Mahatma aside from its programme.

But even doing this did not bring the rewards the Congress had hoped would come. Only vague promises of freedom were made and limited responsibilities offered. The Government was prepared to go to harsh lengths if the Congress "declared war", including the intention to imprison Gandhi again. These views were contained in a letter circulated within the Government by officials and dated the same day as an offer to try to solve the constitutional problems, demanded for so long by the Congress.

Whatever the attitude towards him of the Congress leaders because of his position on war, Gandhi on October 17, 1940 began a campaign to protest against the lack of freedom of speech in India. He wanted the people to be free to speak out against India's participation in war—this specific one or another. But the campaign was confined, in its leadership, to the hand-picked few who were thought able, by Gandhi, to

provide the proper discipline, so as to ensure that there would be no riots or other violent disturbances. Notice of all this, as usual, was given first to the Viceroy.

The slogan was to be:

"It is wrong to help the British war effort with men or money. The only worthy effort is to resist all war with non-violent resistance."

As much as possible this was to be civil disobedience by individuals, not groups. Gandhi emphasized the constructive programme that he had been urging for years. The points in it had been appearing in it gradually over the years. These included labour, democracy, spinning and cloth-weaving, operation of village industries, adult education, improvement of the status of women, elementary education, wider use of the Hindustani language, Hindu-Muslim unity, and prohibition of the use of intoxicants.

It was not long before Gandhi's supporters were arrested for their participation in this latest civil disobedience effort. Vinoba Bhave, a follower of his who was to symbolize Gandhi for many years after the Mahatma's death, was jailed after making a public speech. Next to be imprisoned was Jawaharlal Nehru, who was given a four-year sentence. Within seven weeks, almost four hundred Congress legislators had been jailed, among them 29 former ministers of the provincial governments.

By the end of 1941 more than twenty-five thousand individual *satyagrahis* had been convicted. Theirs still was not a mass campaign, for Gandhi had held tightly to the plan of keeping the effort an individual matter. It did not—nor was it intended to—interfere with Britain's war plans. Only mild sentences were given to those arrested and some of Gandhi's critics could not see that it was accomplishing anything to proceed as the *satyagrahis* were doing.

Early in December, 1941, the Government released those

detained for civil disobedience. The attack on Pearl Harbour occurred on December 7, bringing the United States into the world conflict. Japan soon thereafter also menaced India. The great majority of the Indian intelligentsia were anti-Nazi, anti-Fascist, and anti-Japanese; the Indian people as a whole, cut off in their villages, scarcely knew what was taking place.

At first, the Congress likened British imperialism in India to Fascist dictatorship. It continued with the programme of symbolic civil disobedience, sticking to the point that the British would not agree to the Indian National Congress terms for India's freedom. Gandhi persisted, however, in his insistence that opposition to the war should be on the larger issue of non-violence.

Troubling both groups now was this problem: will the Japanese be resisted, if they attack India, with violent or non-violent means? Most Congress leaders, Gandhi believed, were not trained enough in the use of non-violence against a foreign enemy.

Meantime, the British Government in England had appointed a mission to study the situation in India. Sir Stafford Cripps came to the sub-continent to discuss the plans. These were that elections were to be held after the war to elect provincial legislators, members of the lower houses were to elect a constitutional committee to draw up a constitution, etc. India was to obtain full dominion status and the rights of racial and religious minorities were to be guarded. The princely states, however, would make separate agreements with Great Britain.

Gandhi and Nehru found these proposals unacceptable because of the clause permitting separate agreements with the princely states. These, they feared, would split the country into many small units instead of creating a united nation. Also, such a policy would encourage M.A. Jinnah in further ideas of separation of the Muslim majority provinces from the remainder of India.

An attempt to reconcile the differences broke down over a misunderstanding. Consequently the proposals were not carried out. Britain was unwilling to give India self-government during the war and Cripps blamed Gandhi for the failure. Gandhi, he charged, had interfered in an intention by the Congress Working Committee to accept the British plans and had had the action reversed.

Historians have since pointed out that Cripps had telegraphed to Gandhi to come to Delhi for a conference with him, that Gandhi had been reluctant but went, that he left Delhi in the early part of negotiations, and that the final decision was made by the Working Committee, which was aware of Gandhi's dissatisfaction but also of his policy of non-interference. The failure of the Cripps mission, in fact, was a great disappointment to Gandhi.

As all this blame-fixing was going on, the war went ever worse for the British and their Allies. Japanese attacks on India had begun. Consequently, the Indian leaders—except Gandhi and those accepting his view—decided to postpone the long-range programme and to concentrate on the attack and counterattack. Yet the Indian people could not avoid being suspicious of the British Government's intentions towards them and their desire for freedom, for the Government was enlarging its military forces, equipment, and supplies.

Then Gandhi made a dramatic proposal: let Great Britain free India at once. Only in this way, he said, could England be sure to get the support of the people in the war to defend India. From this proposal arose a slogan to be heard many times: "Quit India".

At once Gandhi was called defeatist, even treasonous. And his proposal was not followed, of course. But the reality of an invasion still existed, whatever the means of defence selected.

Anticipating a possible Japanese landing or entry, Gandhi

asked Mira Behn to go to Orissa, in eastern India, to train the people in non-violent resistance. He urged in a letter to her that there should be complete non-co-operation with the Japanese if they invaded India, that the people should not submit to the invader willingly but should evacuate the invaded area and as he put it, "resist unto death".

Then Gandhi made another proposal, one which seemed to be a reversal of his basic philosophy. He agreed that Allied troops should remain in India, since he could not guarantee successful non-violent resistance against Japan. He was also willing to see an Indian National Government set up and that it should enter into a treaty with the Allied nations for the defence of India against the Axis powers.

Why did Gandhi change his view? Undoubtedly, for two reasons: the war had taken a critical turn and he intensely desired freedom for India.

Action was not taken on this proposal any more than on the first one he had made. A "Quit India" resolution, however, was passed on August 8, 1942, by the All-India Congress Committee with the warning that it might resume civil disobedience under Gandhi's direction. In the small hours of the following day Gandhi, Nehru, Sardar Patel, Azad, and other leaders were arrested. Violence against the British Government immediately broke out in various parts of the country. Buildings were burnt, railway lines damaged, and communication wires cut, although Gandhi had counselled non-violence as the principle of the struggle. These acts, as usual, provoked violence in return.

Gandhi was put in the Aga Khan Palace, a temporary place of detention near Poona, not far from Yeravda, where he already had spent so much of his life in prison. Here he was from August 1942 to May 1944. The place was a striking building of high arches, towers, and balconies, with palm-trees and fountains around it on a wide lawn—but still it was a prison.

Blame for these wholesale arrests Gandhi put on the violent outbreaks. Winston Churchill, however, called it armed revolution that had been planned for a long time. That this accusation was untrue was proved by the fact that Gandhi, on the contrary, had prepared a plan for civil disobedience, which his arrest prevented him from carrying forward. It included resignation of Congressmen who were members of public bodies, breaking of the salt laws, refusal to pay land taxes, withdrawal from school of students more than 16 years old, and asking those influenced by the spirit of communalism or harbouring hatred or ill-will "in his heart against any Indian or Englishman" to "keep aloof".

Gandhi and the Viceroy corresponded frequently over the matter. The Mahatma began a fast of 21 days on February 10, 1943, and grew dangerously weak. Government indifference to the situation continued, even when leaders of many political parties pleaded for his release from prison. The Viceroy called the fast "political blackmail", thereby enraging the public still more.

Gandhi had concluded by now that he would be imprisoned for many more years. He had, in fact, drawn up a schedule of daily life in prison and observed it carefully. He noted his daily caloric intake to make sure that he did not take a calorie more than was needed for his health. His prayers, walks, and reading periods occupied most of his time. His reading selections were characteristic of his earlier prison mental fare: Shakespeare, Browning, Shaw, Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin all were on his 1944 list. He read the first volume of Marx's *Das Kapital* for the first time during this imprisonment and at the age of 74. His comment on the book was:

"I could have written it better, assuming, of course, I had the leisure for study Marx has put in....I do not care whether Marxism is right or wrong. All I know is that the poor are

being crushed. Something has got to be done for them. To me this is axiomatic."

But more personal blows than jail life were to fall upon Mohandas Gandhi during the year that was to follow.

## CHAPTER XXI

### SORROW AND WAR'S END

MAHADEV DESAI, the dearest to Gandhi of his many secretaries, worked tirelessly for him during the years of jailings and rebuffs from the Government. The strain of the "Quit India" campaign, his concern for the effect upon Gandhi of the February fast in 1943, and the general overwork resulting from his complete devotion to Gandhi took their toll. In August 1943, he died—in the Aga Khan Palace Fort. Desai's death was totally unexpected, occurring in a matter of minutes.

"Everyone was speechless," Mira Behn, who was in an adjoining room when it happened, has reported. "Not only the passing away of such a noble and devoted soul, but the thought of the irreparable loss it would mean to Bapu rent our hearts."

Kasturbai's reaction was: "Bapu has lost his right hand, and his left hand. Both his hands, Bapu has lost."

Mahadev's body was cremated outside the prison-yard hut within the Fort compound. Each morning, with unbroken regularity, Gandhi took flowers to the site of the cremation and the others recited verses from the *Bhagavad Gita* and hymns were sung, particularly "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross".

Mira Behn put religious symbols on the stone and a mud mound that marked the spot—the mystic letter OM, the Islamic Star and Crescent, the Christian Cross. The cross, she wrote, was a symbol of supreme sacrifice that "represented for him the most fundamental urge of his being".

This loss was bad enough for Gandhi, but Kasturbai was sick as well. While with her husband at the prison at the Aga Khan Palace, she died on February 22, 1944, a new blow for him less than half a year after Mahadev's death.

Kasturbai had asked that when she died she be cremated in a sari made of yarn which her husband had spun. This wish symbolized their devotion. They had been married 62 years. She, too, had suffered imprisonment from time to time.

"My mind does not think of anything else but Ba," Gandhi said after her death. Of the table on which Kasturbai used to sit or lie down he said: "This table has become a very valuable thing for me. The picture of Ba reclining her head on it always stands before my eyes." Referring to her last moments, he observed: "Ba's calling me thus at her last moment and her passing away while lying on my lap is really a wonderful thing. Such a kind of relation between husband and wife does not exist generally among us."

Kasturbai's body was also cremated in the prison-yard. Her and Mahadev's ashes lay finally side by side there.

That this double loss was to have its physical effects upon Gandhi was not surprising. Already weak, he contracted malaria. Fearing that he too might die in jail, the Government released him and he left the prison on May 6, 1944.

Kately, the superintendent of the detention camp, came to Gandhi a few hours before his departure from prison.

"Tomorrow morning, when you go out," he said, "I shall be standing on duty as a servant of the Crown in uniform. So I have come now to take your blessings."

As Gandhi left, after the prayers, Kately presented him with a purse of 75 rupees in anticipation of the Mahatma's 75th birthday, and said:

"Mahatmaji, you will receive many purses outside, but let Kately's be the first."

His companions took Gandhi to Juhu, a sea resort near Bombay. His illness was diagnosed more carefully and it was learnt that he had hookworms, amoebic dysentery, and acute anemia. He recovered from all of them several weeks later.

Meanwhile, the threat of a Japanese invasion of India had somewhat receded but famine was now stalking the land. Gandhi decided to try to bring together the Congress, an outlawed political party by this time, and the Government. He wrote to the Viceroy and to Churchill, in a manner he thought befitting a believer in *satyagraha*. In his letters he proposed a national government for India.

But both officials repulsed him. Churchill, who disliked Gandhi and had, in fact, even insulted him and had described him as a "naked fakir", received this letter in July 1944 from Gandhi:

Dear Prime Minister:

You are reported to have the desire to crush the "naked fakir", as you are said to have described me. I have been long trying to be a fakir and that naked—a more difficult task. I, therefore, regard the expression as a compliment though unintended. I approach you then as such and ask you to trust and use me for the sake of your people and mine and through them those of the world.

Your sincere friend,  
M. K. Gandhi

The letter, however, did not reach the Prime Minister. Two months later a copy of it was sent again but only an acknowledgement was received.

Letters also went from Gandhi to Jinnah, in an attempt to reach a concord with the Muslim League, but this proposal was rejected as well. Then Gandhi asked for the opportunity to see Jinnah. They met for more than two weeks in September. But these and later sessions came to nothing because Jinnah wanted the Muslims to have their own homeland.

Jinnah's prestige was raised by these activities and made him more insistent upon his position, whereas Gandhi regretted the insistence and hoped that India would never be partitioned.

War ended in Europe by May 1945; and in the Orient by August. Elections in India were promised, as was a committee to formulate a constitution. The Labour Party had by now come to power in England; there was a new Secretary of State for India, and a Parliamentary delegation was being sent out to India to discuss the possibilities of self-government. But the Congress leaders were still not enthusiastic.

With troops being demobilized by the beginning of 1946, the Indian people became restless and rebellious under continued British rule, even to the point of violence. At the same time, the Labour Party in England became more concerned about settling the Indian problem. Clement Attlee, Britain's new Prime Minister, led an altered policy towards the Indian problem, a policy inspired by the long years of work by such idealists as Muriel Lester, C. F. Andrews, Horace Alexander, Fenner Brockway and Harold J. Laski.

Attlee sent three Cabinet members on mission to the sub-continent, including Stafford Cripps, who by now had been knighted. This committee interviewed scores of Indian people and conferred frequently with Gandhi. The main problem was Partition—its necessity, and if that were granted, its nature. The committee produced an elaborate plan for a constitutional structure which in general suited Gandhi but on which he had some doubts.

He was concerned lest the Congress accept the plan too quickly and was fearful of the violence that would break out once the British actually quit India. While the negotiations were going on, in fact, clashes between Hindus and Muslims were occurring, aided by ruffians.

Gandhi therefore urged non-violence and restraint. But even he had no inkling of what was to occur.

Jawaharlal Nehru was asked to form a government and in turn requested Jinnah to join it, but the Muslim leader refused

and instead spoke against the Congress Party. Jinnah called for observance of "Direct Action Day" on August 16, 1946. This burst into a four-day riot in Calcutta in which more than five thousand were killed and three times that number injured. The provincial Government of Bengal was in the hands of a minority, which led to violence by Hindus and other non-Muslims, only worsening the situation. Retaliation followed revenge.

Because conditions were especially bad in East Bengal, Gandhi insisted upon going there. He saw the results of what he called "mass madness". He made the trip to try to be of help to the people of the area. At first he received co-operation from the Government. He found that his philosophy of *ahimsa*, that is, action based on the view that one should refuse to harm others, had lost much of its force in the atmosphere of bitterness and mutual suspicion that prevailed in that part of India.

He decided to go to the village Srirampur, once occupied by Muslims and Hindus but now virtually without Hindus. He sent his companions into nearby villages and set up his own headquarters at Srirampur, using no more than a wooden bed as his main piece of furniture—as a desk by day and a bed by night.

He visited local Muslims so that they came to know him, for it was this religious group that had been maligning him. His aim was to bring the Hindu and Muslim communities together again. Despite opposition from the Muslim Press, he managed to ease the tension, but the papers finally aroused the Government and certain Muslim leaders to demand that Gandhi leave because of the political implications of his visit.

Going barefoot, he then toured nearby villages and departed in March for Bihar, the scene of revenge by Hindus on Muslims. There he insisted on civilized conduct and on reconciliation. He collected money from Hindus for the relief of Muslims affected by the riots.

In the meantime, the commission plan was not working out and the British Government felt that it must invite the Muslim League to take part in the interim government, which the latter refused to do.

Attlee announced in Parliament, early in 1947, that the British intended to leave India by June 1948, and that Government power would be transferred when there would be an all-India constitution. This news caused an international sensation, for it gave the Indian people responsibility.

The Hindu leaders were satisfied but the Muslims interpreted this as an attempt to deny them power in the Muslim-majority provinces. New violence then arose as Muslim ministers replaced the Hindu leaders in the Governments of these areas.

During these days Gandhi was continuing to try to reconcile the communal forces in various parts of the country. He sought, by example, to minimize the differences. Manubehn Gandhi, the Mahatma's grand-daughter who helped him in his work, relates that at one time in the winter of 1947, her grandfather was in a village when a little girl was ill, having contracted both pneumonia and typhoid fever. When Gandhi approached the girl, the other women left her, because they observed *purdah*. A child of a destitute family, the youngster was thin and cold. Gandhi removed his shawl and covered her with it, washed her face, and comforted her. He then asked Manubehn to feed her honey and warm water and to apply mud packs to her face. By nightfall the child's temperature had dropped to normal !

Her women relatives, who had fled when Gandhi had come, now returned and were full of gratitude, asking what they could do for him in return and called him a "messenger of God". His answer was:

"I am neither an angel nor a prophet. To render service to others is my life's mission, and I am here to serve you....I do

not claim credit for the recovery of this girl. She was cleansed, and fed with nutritious food....I ask of you to fear none, and not to cause fear to anyone...."

As events developed, Gandhi became discouraged. He thought he had failed as a believer in non-violence. He did not realize that perhaps he had expected too much of himself in a nation so large as India, and that the Hindu-Muslim conflict created extraordinary conditions that put an unbearable strain on the tolerance of the people. Faith in accepted authority had been shaken and the authorities were challenged. Private armies existed. Gandhi realized the dangers, although he found it difficult to believe that people could be so violent and ruthless after all that had been done to teach them other activities and other ideals.

Although Gandhi had great influence among the Hindus, he had only a little with the Muslims. The Muslims of India had no leader with his aims and methods who was in a position of power. Jinnah was the outstanding Muslim leader but had neither sympathy for nor understanding of non-violent techniques. Both Hindu and Muslim leaders, also, were ineffective in restraining their people at times.

Britain hoped to avoid a civil war in India by making Lord Mountbatten the Viceroy in March 1947. Soon after arrival in India the new Government head had asked Gandhi to go to New Delhi to see him, which he did. He suggested to Mountbatten that he ask Jinnah to form a cabinet, so as to free Jinnah of his suspicions of the Congress and the Hindus.

But both the British Government and other Hindu leaders considered this proposal quixotic. Jinnah himself saw the new Viceroy and continued to demand Partition. Then came a decision by the Congress that startled the world and appalled Gandhi. This was the decision to accept the division of India.

Not all the Congress leaders and certainly not Gandhi wanted

this result. The reasoning behind the decision of the majority was that Partition was to be preferred to the anarchy which, it was thought, would follow any united government of Hindus and Muslims. So negotiations proceeded.

Gandhi had no part in them, naturally. Partition, he believed, was a disaster. But since the other Congress leaders in the main and the Muslim League accepted the Partition, he did not interfere. He supported the Mountbatten plan for the division of the country so as not to create a break in the Congress, which he believed needed unity now as never before. But he had no heart for what he supported. His feelings were not known to any but his closest associates in the Congress group.

He then turned his attention to how the transfer could be made without dire results for the country. He feared trouble all the more as a result of visits to the disturbed areas before August 15, 1947, the day of the transfer. He saw the dangers in the riots occurring.

Gandhi's influence was brought to bear to stop the rioting. He was successful with the Hindus, who reacted immediately. Disorder ceased quickly. On August 14, the eve of the day, both Hindus and Muslims in Calcutta celebrated the event peaceably. Gandhi held prayer meetings to which came hundreds of thousands of people belonging to both faiths.

But soon after freedom had officially been gained, disturbances occurred in Western Pakistan and India and violence was resumed in Calcutta. A Hindu mob attacked the workingmen's house where Gandhi insisted on living while in that city. He was nearly struck by sticks or bricks several times.

On September 1, he announced that he would go on a fast in the hope that he might thereby bring reconciliation. At once peace was pledged by the leaders of the communal groups. And peace was in fact restored in the north-eastern part of the country.

From there Gandhi departed towards the Punjab in Western India and Pakistan, since communal strife continued in those areas; it had been going on for several months. The shifting of five million Hindus into Muslim territory and of a like number of Muslims into the Hindu sections naturally led to enormous problems, including new violence wherever they settled. But he never reached the western section.

Because New Delhi also was a trouble spot, Gandhi decided, on arrival there *en route* west, to remain instead of going on, since that city, too, needed his help. He went to live at the Birla House, the residence of the family of that name, and spoke daily to the people who came for his *darshan*. He talked of the uselessness of revenge and urged faith in non-violence. He visited the refugee camps, seeking to comfort the displaced. Violence went on, nevertheless. A fast such as he had launched at Calcutta might bring the troubles to an end in Delhi, he decided, and on January 13, 1948, began his campaign.

## SACRIFICE TO VIOLENCE

THE NEW FAST, Gandhi announced, would be stopped only when the city was peaceful again. Within five days leaders of all parties had signed a pledge to maintain peace. The strife ceased. Gandhi wanted to go to Pakistan to help the refugees there, as he had planned before coming to Delhi. He wished also to return to the work of improving the lot of the villagers. But on January 20 a bomb exploded in Birla House as he was addressing his prayer group. He disregarded it, although it was only a few feet from where he sat. He asked the police not to harm the young man who had been responsible, one Madan Lal, a refugee from the Punjab. Lal was a member of a group of fanatical Hindus who believed their religion to be endangered by Muslims, and by Gandhi as well.

Another member of this group was Nathuram Vinayak Godse, a journalist from Poona, the city where Gandhi had spent so many years in prison.

Police were concerned after the bombing, and wished to search all who came to Gandhi's prayer meeting. But Gandhi would not hear of it. The police believed a conspiracy might be afoot to kill Gandhi.

Why this hatred and animosity towards a man who had lived most of his life for his people and whose central philosophy was based on brotherhood and love of his fellow men? The extremist Hindus represented by Lal and Godse wanted war with Pakistan. They thought Gandhi wanted to prevent it, as indeed he did. They believed India would win such a war and be reunited with Pakistan as a result. They saw a reunited India. They felt that Gandhi was protecting Muslims in India and

retaining them in the country, while Hindus were being massacred in Pakistan and were compelled to leave it.

Ten days after this incident, on January 30, Gandhi left his room for the usual evening prayer meeting out in the compound. The routine was the same except that he was a few minutes late. He was accompanied by his grandnieces, Ava and Manu, but he walked quickly because of his lateness.

As Gandhi came to the crowd awaiting him, he apologized for his tardiness, and made the *namaskar*, a sign of greeting. At that instant Godse stepped forward and fired a small revolver quickly, three times, directly at Gandhi.

Gandhi fell at once, saying only "He Rama!" (O God!). He died within five minutes. Since he had prohibited his *ashram* to have drugs even if they might save his own life, there were no medicines at hand for this emergency.

Nehru, Patel, Prasad, Devadas, the Mahatma's son, and others rushed to his side, all in a state of shock and tears. Someone suggested, when the funeral plans were being made, that his body be embalmed, but Gandhi had always opposed making a fetish of the physical remains after death, so this idea was abandoned quickly. Instead, his body was burnt the next evening on the banks of the Jamuna river. As the flames went down, so did the flames of communal strife.

His assassin had calculated incorrectly. Gandhi's death at his hands did not lead to greater unity but to the firmer separation of India and Pakistan as two nations, as they still are. Godse was sentenced to be hanged, a fate which Gandhi would not have approved in all probability.

The reaction of the Mahatma's closest associates was as if each had lost his beloved father. Nehru, Sarojini Naidu, Sardar Patel, and the others among the Congress party leaders had not always agreed with Gandhi, but they had no doubt of his saintliness and sincerity. Nehru voiced their anguish at Gandhi's unex-

pected and cruel death when he spoke to the nation over the radio on the night of the day of Gandhi's murder. His words contributed a new statement to the memorable ones by any of the world's leaders:

"The light has gone out of our lives and there is darkness everywhere. I do not know what to tell you and how to say it. Our beloved leader, Bapu, as we called him, the father of the nation, is no more. Perhaps I am wrong to say that. Nevertheless, we will not see him again as we have seen him for these many years. We will not run to him for advice and seek solace from him, and that is a terrible blow, not to me only but to millions and millions in this country....

"The light has gone out, I said, and yet I was wrong. For the light that shone in this country was no ordinary light. The light that has illumined this country for these many, many years will illumine this country for many more years, and a thousand years later that light will still be seen in this country and the world will see it and it will give solace to our innumerable hearts. For that light represented something more than the immediate present; it represented the living, the eternal truths, reminding us of the right path, drawing us from error, taking this ancient country to freedom."

## THE SPIRIT ABIDETH

NEHRU PREDICTED that it would be a thousand years later that the light of Mohandas Gandhi's life would be seen in the world. Other parts of the globe than India were to see that light much sooner.

When Queen Elizabeth II of England visited India in 1961, her first engagement was to go to the Samadhi of Gandhi at Rajghat in Delhi. There she placed a wreath of 450 white roses on the spot where the Mahatma's ashes lie buried. She also planted a four-foot pine sapling on the nearby lawn. In turn, she was presented with a spinning-wheel of the type invented by the Mahatma when he was a prisoner in Yeravda Jail, hand-spun yarn, and various books by and about him.

The contrast in these actions with the Churchillian attitude towards Gandhi not many years before is sharp. The spirit of reconciliation which he epitomized, it was evident, had not died with him. That spirit, in scores of ways, continues to live all over the world. We have seen it at work wherever underprivileged people seek to win civil rights through non-violence. Not every time, but often enough to be convincing that it is worth trying again and again.

Dissenters to Gandhi's way there are, to be sure, even in India. There it can be heard said, as elsewhere, that Gandhi's philosophy does not fit an atomic age or that he was a saint and cannot be imitated or followed literally by mere mortals. But in many ways his spirit still sways India's people.

We know, for instance, of Vinoba Bhave, who has been called by the people an Acharya, a teacher, and by some of the most practical observers "the greatest Gandhian of them all". This

man, a disciple of the Mahatma and among the first to be sent forth by him as a *satyagrahi* like himself, has been walking in Gandhi's footsteps, at times literally as well as figuratively. Over the years since the 1950's began, he has obtained from landowners gifts of more than five million acres of land for redistribution to the landless. This "walking messiah", as he has been called, obtained these huge areas by trudging 35,000 miles from village to village making his appeal. This plan was only one of many Gandhian deeds he performed for civic improvement. He has worked to overcome the damages of failing crops, inadequate local government, and droughts.

Once Bhave went on a walking tour of ravines used as hide-outs by outlaws. For twelve days he strode through the Chambal Valley, often in harsh weather. Conducting prayer meetings, as did Gandhi, he asked the outlaws to surrender themselves to him, warning them that he would turn them over to police officials. A number of criminals, several of them major bandits, gave themselves up nevertheless.

A thin, bespectacled, selfless man amazingly like Gandhi in many ways, Bhave has put his whole faith in the power of love. He believes in the power of faith and kindness as well. "I have faith in the human heart," he has said.

*Satyagraha* campaigns were conducted after Gandhi's death in various areas of the country. Manbhum district in Bihar and Surat district in what then was Bombay State were among the more important. In the latter area the Pardi *satyagraha* was organized by a political group to obtain from the State Government the return of grasslands for cultivation. Fasts have been undertaken often, although not always with the high motives Gandhi had.

Some of the many institutions dedicated to the carrying on of his work and assembling records of it give special attention to Harijan boys and girls who were of so much concern to him.

Still others maintain spinning, paper-making, soap-making, milk production and research in indigenous architecture.

In Africa, where the Gandhian light sometimes shines brightly despite the many internal, violent conflicts between tribes and nations, he has his followers more than two decades after his death. Robert Mangalese Sobukwe, a leader of the Pan-Africanist Congress in South Africa, is an example. A believer in passive resistance, he had led his people in its use in a non-violent campaign against identity cards for Negroes and persons of mixed blood. This position was taken, he has explained, because he believes it is a first step, although a difficult one, in the Africans' march towards free rights. Like Gandhi, Sobukwe, too, does not have the help of the dominant political group of his people, which disapproved of his civil disobedience and his willingness to accept imprisonment.

Another is Kenneth Kaunda, the President of the African nation of Zambia, who for years has advocated and preached non-violence. He lives simply, is a vegetarian, and reveres both Gandhi and Lincoln as his heroes.

And one of the greatest African leaders of all, Albert John Luthuli, at one time President of the African National Congress in South Africa and winner of the 1960 Nobel Peace Prize, was strongly influenced by Gandhi.

Closely related to Africa is France, through its former Algerian territory at the northern end of the continent. French oppositionists to the Algerian War and to the detention of Algerians in internment camps in France in 1960 participated in a non-violent civic action movement. Describing it, a journalist wrote:

"The principles of this non-violent movement are inspired by the methods used by Gandhi in India . . . , then by Negroes in America, and most recently by protesters in the Union of South Africa."

And in Leopoldville, in the Belgian Congo, which was in turmoil from the beginning of the decade of the 1960's, there is more evidence of the Gandhian method at work in still another part of Africa. Wrote an American bishop, while visiting Africa:

“...the Africans are practicing ‘civil disobedience’. For instance, they refuse to pay taxes due on their cars and bicycles.... There are many thousands of bicycles in use and the tax is only sixty cents a year. The Belgian Government feels it would cost more than that to confiscate the bicycles and collect the tax forcibly—and the city wants these bicycles used because the men ride to work on them.... The Africans declare that they will not pay taxes until they can pay to their ‘own government’.”

Early in this decade about a thousand students and other citizens of Iran conducted a passive resistance campaign against the Government then in power. They sat in the middle of the street, after police had prevented them from marching silently in protest against what they considered unfair national elections. Later events showed them to have known the truth and they were vindicated by Government action.

In England and Scotland, early in 1961, thousands of persons participated in a campaign of non-violent civil disobedience in support of nuclear disarmament and against the basing of American missile-carrying submarines in Britain. Leading them in London was Bertrand Russell, the world-famous philosopher and Nobel Prize winner. Professor Nicholas Kemmer, who had worked on a British atomic energy project during World War II in Canada, led the protest in Glasgow.

Another Nobel Peace Prize winner, the Reverend Dominique Pire, of Belgium, directed the construction of a Mahatma Gandhi International Youth Centre in Leige, Belgium. It is intended to promote “better understanding among world youth”.

It is to be open to young people "without distinction as to race and creed".

As far south in the Western Hemisphere as Argentina, Gandhi's light shines. There a new government school dedicated to his memory was declared open in 1964 in Cordoba Province. The idea originated from the interest of several Cordobese admirers of the Mahatma and of India, so they raised money. But there was not enough, so the Government aided the project.

Motivated by the example of Gandhi was the crew of the ketch, the *Phoenix*, almost all Quakers, who have attempted, not always successfully, in recent years to deliver medical supplies to North Vietnamese hospitals, as a demonstration of goodwill.

Under sponsorship of a group called the Committee for Non-violent Action, several dozen American pacifists staged a peace march in Moscow's Red Square during 1961. But they were prohibited by the Soviet authorities from making speeches there or elsewhere. Defying the ban, the marchers then sought to address college students at Moscow University, and were more successful, despite faculty objections. The marchers asked the Soviet Union to discard its nuclear weapons, as they had asked the Americans to do.

Were he alive, all these activities would have brought satisfaction to Gandhi. For they attempt to express his philosophy of the conquest of violence by the power and love of goodwill. This view was put succinctly a few days after Martin Luther King Jr. was murdered. A cartoonist drew a seated Gandhi speaking to a standing Dr. King. He says: "The odd thing about assassins, Dr. King, is that they think they've killed you."

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13.	<b>HARSHA</b>	<i>Shri V. D. Gangal</i> 1.75
14.	<b>SAMUDRAGUPTA</b> ( <i>Hindi</i> )	<i>Dr. Lallanji Gopal</i> 1.25
15.	<b>CHANDRAGUPTA MAURYA</b>	<i>Dr. Lallanji Gopal</i> 1.75
16.	<b>KAZI NAZRUL ISLAM</b>	<i>Shri Basudha Chakravarty</i> 2.00
17.	<b>SANKARACHARYA</b>	<i>Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan</i> 2.00
18.	<b>AMIR KHUSRAU</b>	<i>Shri Saiyid Ghulam Samnani</i> 1.75
19.	<b>NANA PHADANAVIS</b>	<i>Dr. Y. N. Deodhar</i> 1.75
20.	<b>RANJIT SINGH</b>	<i>Shri D. R. Sood</i> 2.00
21.	<b>HARI NARAYAN APTE</b>	<i>Dr. M. A. Karandikar</i> 1.75
22.	<b>R. G. BHANDARKAR</b>	<i>Dr. H. A. Phadke</i> 1.75
23.	<b>MUTHUSWAMI DIKSHITAR</b>	<i>Justice T. L. Venkatarama Aiyar</i> 2.00
24.	<b>MIRZA GHALIB</b>	<i>Shri Malik Ram</i> 2.00
25.	<b>RAMANUJACHARYA</b>	<i>Shri R. Parthasarathy</i> 2.00
26.	<b>ISHWAR CHANDRA VIDYASAGAR</b>	<i>Shri S. K. Bose</i> 2.00
27.	<b>SURDAS</b> ( <i>Hindi</i> )	<i>Shri Vrajeshwar Varma</i> 1.75

